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Names In Stone: War Memorials As Commemorative Intermediaries

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Names In Stone:
War Memorials As Commemorative Intermediaries

by

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ABSTRACT

This project examines the function of post First World War memorials as intermediaries between those family, friends, and community members who remained on the home front, and their local soldiers whose bodies were never repatriated after the war. The names engraved in stone on these memorials were, and continue to be, integral to the connection that existed which bridged physical distance during the interwar period, but also links contemporary viewers to the past in a way not achievable where memorials without the names of soldiers are considered. Investigating primarily a combination of local newspapers and soldiers’ personal records, this research presents the case that the relevance of war memorials remains into the present, even as the living memory of the war and its echoes into history have now passed.
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Introduction

Canada’s contribution to the war effort, as measured through the enlistment of soldiers to fight in the First World War, was commendable. For a country with a population of approximately eight million people throughout the war years, enlistment figures of 619,636 soldiers, including the near hundred thousand who were conscripted through the Military Services Act of 1917 who served in the war, was outstanding.¹ Nearly ten percent of the Canadians who served in the war gave their lives while fighting for the cause.² When the fighting ended on November 11, 1918, preparation for construction of many of Canada’s war memorials and monuments was already underway. They were built in varied degrees of form and scale, with commemorations dedicated to soldiers at either the local, provincial, or national levels. Memorials and monuments were erected throughout Canada and across the Western Front to honour the efforts and sacrifices of Canadian soldiers during the war.

At the local level, communities large and small, made plans for war memorials to commemorate soldiers who left from their locality to fight in the war. While some memorials included broad inscriptions dedicated to all soldiers who fought in the First World War, most of the memorials on the home front were specifically built to recognize the sacrifices of their local soldiers who had given their lives at war. Community members collectively designed their memorials to honour those soldiers; the resultant cenotaphs, cairns, and obelisks “could act as ‘empty graves’ and be foci of memory for those who would never see the graves of their relatives overseas.”³ Additionally, other types of memorials that were created in the inter-war period included buildings, arches and named [or renamed] streets; however, these utilitarian memorials are sparsely documented and less likely to have withstood the test of time and urban development.
than their more traditionally styled counterparts.

The Canadian monuments on the Western Front were more varied in their dedications, ranging from wide commemorations dedicated to all soldiers who served, to the acknowledgement of a particular battalion, unit or province’s soldiers, and those that specifically referenced the efforts of soldiers who fought in a certain battle. The monuments erected on the Western Front were often located in sites with actual graves of fellow soldiers of the Empire surrounding, and the stone surfaces of some of these monuments were covered in the engraved names of thousands of missing soldiers whose bodies were never found or identified. The juxtaposition of the graves of those soldiers who were identified, with the names of the unknown dead engraved upon the stone walls, forms a striking reminder of the immensity of loss that was felt by all who were touched by the experience of the First World War.

Because the bodies of Canadian soldiers killed during the First World War were never repatriated as a result of a stringent policy implemented by the Imperial War Graves Commission, the memorials that were built in communities across Canada served as meaningful markers of a connection between the soldiers whose lives were given in war, and the communities from which they came on the home front. Communities in Canada and throughout the western world built memorials after the First World War in an effort to reconcile the grief they felt at the loss of so many of their local men, as “in this way the memory of the men who had fallen would be kept green by an act of personal service.” The memorials were the result of the collective effort of those who remained on the home front, preserving the names and thus memories of these local soldiers for generations of Canadians to observe and contemplate the sacrifices they had made.
The war memorials erected in the communities of Chemainus, Courtenay, Duncan, Ladysmith, Nanaimo, and Parksville will be the focus of this study. The process of commemoration that was involved in the erection of the memorial, as well as the prominent position of said memorial within the community landscape, were integral to both reconciling the grief of loss and simultaneously maintaining a connection to the soldier who had sacrificed his life at war. Chapter One will contain an examination of the periods during which community members in the six localities where these memorials were built collectively felt greater grief at the loss of more of their local soldiers as a result of heavy conflict that Canadians were involved in on the Western Front. This will be set in the context of a historical profile of each of these communities and an analysis of the demographics of soldiers and comparison to the demographics of Vancouver Island as a whole.

Prior to discussing the specifics of the process of memorialization in each of these communities, an examination of the memorial landscape in the province of British Columbia is crucial. Chapter Two will provide this overview with respect to British Columbia, Canada and the Western Front, as an understanding of the commemoration during and immediately after the First World War within these spheres will contribute a basis for appreciating the choices made by community members in these six Vancouver Island communities. As the local memorials were physical symbols at which to focus this grief in the absence of the graves of those local soldiers, the process of memorialization in these communities will be discussed in Chapter Three, with respect to how each memorial was brought to completion.

As a result of the neglect of this area of research, the study of war memorials
with engraved names of soldiers has potential that is rich with opportunity for even further exploration. The decision to include the names of individual soldiers on the face of the memorials was a deliberate one, the importance of which was equal in weight, if not greater than, the decisions made regarding location, form or design.

In order to uncover the process of memorialization in these communities, this research has been based upon a close reading of local newspapers from the selected cities on Vancouver Island, including the Comox Argus, Nanaimo Free Press, and the Cumberland Islander, the Cowichan Leader, as well as larger newspapers from nearby Victoria, the capital of British Columbia, specifically The Daily Colonist. When consulting these local newspapers, I have taken care to ensure the original language and sentiment behind each article has not been altered to ensure they can be read with the intended meaning. Likewise, this language choice has been replicated throughout this study. The information gleaned from local newspapers then, particularly with reference to the experience of hearing about the heavy combat in the Battle of Vimy Ridge, the Battle of the Somme and the several battles of the Last Hundred Days, will be compared to the home front experiences described in the work of Ian Miller and Robert Rutherford. This comparison is important for the purpose of defining a wider connection between the six small communities on Vancouver Island that are the focus of this study and the broader experience of grief of Canadians during and after the First World War.

Attestation papers that were filled out by the individual soldiers when they enlisted in the expeditionary force are available online through the Library and Archives of Canada, and provide valuable information about these men, including, but not being limited to, the battalions in which they served, their age, trade,
religion, and place of birth. Casualty details, as held by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, complement the information provided on attestation papers by providing the date that the soldiers were killed, and the cemetery where they were buried or memorial on which their name is engraved if their body was never found, as well as personal information about the soldier’s surviving family. The information about where cemeteries or memorials holding the soldiers’ bodies or names can be found in France or Belgium is often valuable in the attempt to determine which battles or areas of the front the individual soldiers may have been involved in prior to their death.

Furthermore, the Canadian Virtual War Memorial was invaluable as a searchable database that allowed for identification of the soldiers. A deeper look at the lives of soldiers from these six communities, both prior to and during the war, as well as the situation surrounding their death in service and the way that the community coped with said loss provides a useful lens through which to comprehend the loss each community felt when they discovered their soldiers would not return from war. When selecting soldiers to examine in this way, care was taken to ensure that the names were chosen so as to not skew the results of the analysis. For this reason, I have selected the three one-month periods during which the highest concentration of soldiers from the communities in this study died. Admittedly, the data for identifying these periods of loss was based only upon the soldiers for whom their date of death could be ascertained. There were a small number of the names on each memorial for which no information could be found using any of the resources discussed above, possibly as a result of inconsistencies in spelling between memorials and the soldier’s official records;
understandably, their date of death, then, did not get factored into the periods of loss that I have identified.

Most historians have come to the agreement that the First World War, at least for English-speaking Canada, was a nation-building event. Robert Shipley, in his book *To Mark Our Place: A History of Canadian War Memorials*, has this premise as the foundation for his research, positing that after the start of the war in 1914, English-Canadian communities lost any remaining innocence as new municipalities, as they each dealt with the deaths of so many of their local men.° Memorials were built with vigor as these communities grappled with such a loss of lives, and sought to establish their worth as a city or town and demonstrate civic pride in the war efforts of their young men in uniform.

Furthermore, Jonathan Vance asserted that after the First World War, the soldier emerged as an individual man, not simply one of the collective as depicted in the nineteenth century characterization of a soldier as a “nameless, faceless man, barely respectable and certainly not worthy of note on an individual basis.”°° He describes the importance of the soldier as an individual in commemorative efforts within his account of the “cult of the service roll, an obsession with listing the names of those soldiers who had joined the colours.”°° While I agree that there is significance that lies in the use of individual soldiers’ names in commemoration, I contend that the emphasis on individual names suggests, rather, that those names were important as identifiers of the soldiers as members of a particular group, which in this case was each of the six communities where the selected memorials were constructed. When communities built memorials, and listed upon them the names of those individual soldiers who had sacrificed their lives “over
there,” they were not observing the individual efforts of those men, but rather the individual efforts of those soldiers were significant because they had been members of those respective communities or groups. The names on the memorials connected the two disparate worlds of the home front the soldiers left behind and the battlefields large and small across the Western Front where the soldiers were ultimately laid to rest.

The concept of the citizen soldier in Canada in the years leading up to the First World War, and how that concept changed, was examined by James Wood in his book *Militia Myths: Ideas of the Canadian Citizen Soldier, 1896-1921.* Within this discussion, Wood describes how Canada’s understanding of military service changed both as a result of the nature of conflict that emerged during the First World War and the conscription crisis of 1917. He argued that “between 1914 and 1918, the self-sacrificing young man who had answered the call to arms in 1914 and gone directly from civilian life to the army overseas had succeeded in taking the place of the long-serving pre-war militiaman as the archetypical citizen soldier.” This shift in conception of the image of a soldier that occurred through the First World War makes understandable the parallel shift in memorialization practices wherein the soldier as an individual, while being identified as a member of the community, became the focus of commemoration and memorial construction.

The battles that interrupted the grinding stalemate of the First World War brought casualties on a scale never before seen in the Western World. Attempting to reconcile the immense loss of life during this war, a culture of collective remembrance emerged, and through this, an importance placed on the efforts of individual soldiers. Jay Winter, in *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural*
History, discusses the “theme of mourning and its private and public expression,” suggesting that the people of Europe [and arguably the rest of the Western World] attempted to “interpret the Great War within traditional frames of reference.” The need for collective expression of grief is reflected in the commemoration and memorialization of the war dead in the years after the First World War. People in communities in Europe, North America, and the rest of the British Empire communicated their feelings of mourning and loss to each other, and the outside world, through the construction of war memorials that drew upon a long tradition of war memorial design and symbolism. Community members in each of these localities borrowed aspects from traditional forms and war memorial conventions to shape memorials for their community that effectively honoured their local men; the memorials were the means through which community members both came to understand as well as conveyed their grief for the loss of local soldiers.

Exhaustive histories of the First World War such as Colonel G. W. L. Nicholson’s Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919, and Ian Beckett’s The Great War prove to be particularly useful to contextualize the times during which communities experienced the loss of multiple soldiers in a short period of time. Such losses were often the result of soldiers enlisting together and serving in the same units, and subsequently then in the same battles or at the same sections of the front together. Connecting this community experience of loss to the greater war effort, where battles sometimes resulted in high casualty figures across not only the Canadian Expeditionary Forces, but also at times the entire British Forces, allows for this localized research to become representative of a wider experience of community loss during the First World
War, and demonstrate a focused examination of how communities coped with this loss through the process of memorialization.

It is important here to make the distinction between war memorials and war monuments. War memorials, as will be discussed in the following, were those dedicated to the soldiers whose lives were lost while at war. Approximately half of such memorials located in British Columbia list the names of individuals, and the fact that their names were on it was just as important as the erection of each memorial in the first place. Robert Shipley argues in To Mark Our Place that the importance placed on remembering the names of the “common soldier as well as the general” arose as a result of the “rise of democratic ideals.” This study will examine war memorials specifically those that do have names engraved upon them and were erected in the period immediately following the First World War but before the Second World War.

War monuments, however, were often dedicated to wider groups of soldiers, from specific battalions, large cities, or provinces, and featured a markedly more celebratory tone in their commemorative inscription. They were at times dedicated to individuals, but not in the same commemorative manner that war memorials were, for the monuments, if dedicated to individuals, were constructed to celebrate the actions of one, not many. Monuments were also more often constructed in appreciation of the efforts and achievements of all soldiers who enlisted during the war, not just those who sacrificed their lives. A further division between these working definitions of memorials and monuments is that the former were more often erected through the efforts of community members and service organizations, whereas the latter were raised with a political intent, and generally were not the expression of the wider public in response to the sacrifice at
war of their local men. This is not to say that public monuments built after the First World War were not representative of wider sentiment about the war effort or victories, but that they were not built *as a result of this sentiment*. To be clear, it is the memorials that were raised through the collective efforts of community members in the process of mourning the death in service of local men, those that specifically named the soldiers on the memorial, which will be the focus of this explanation.

In terms of those war memorials in British Columbia that did include the names of soldiers, and were built between the First World War and the Second World War, there were eighteen. There were six of those eighteen that had names engraved which are located on Vancouver Island in the communities of Chemainus, Courtenay, Duncan, Ladysmith, Nanaimo and Parksville and will be the focus of this study. In addition to these communities’ relevance to one another because of their comparable memorialization choices, they have provided a practical basis for comparison due to their relative size and close geographic location on Vancouver Island. Larger cities than these were often the location of memorials or monuments dedicated to the wider efforts of Canadian soldiers or an inscription to all soldiers who sacrificed their lives at war. While larger cities such as Vancouver and Victoria tended to take a broad, all-encompassing approach to their memorialization, commemoration of individual soldiers on community war memorials through the inscription of names occurred repeatedly in centers of average or smaller size throughout the rest of Canada.

The memorials, in their various forms, were simultaneously an expression of gratitude for the efforts of soldiers while at war, as well as grieving for the loss of these same soldiers’ lives. The names were a significant factor in the process of
memorialization and aided in reconciling grief in years following as they served an important purpose as a physical marker in absence of the grave of each of the local soldiers. In terms of the contemporary value of the names, they allow the observer a connection to the past that would not exist in absence of the names. The names commemorated on the memorials belong to people whose familial descendants continue to live and thrive in the communities profiled here. Therefore, even someone casually passing the memorials today, in glimpsing the inscriptions, might recognize the family names of an old school friend, a colleague, or a community member. In this recognition, a bridge is created between the past and present, between the century-old war and its grieving communities, and between commemoration and remembrance.

In addition to the broader study of the memorials and their construction, data about the soldiers was used to determine periods during which these communities on Vancouver Island experienced considerable grief as a result of particularly high casualty rates. Furthermore, the closer look at the periods of higher loss of soldiers’ lives, and the way in which the community members coped with such loss, connects the grief of community members on Vancouver Island to that felt throughout Canada as a result of particularly violent battles, and draws parallels between each community by examining them and their respective losses collectively. Furthermore, using the soldiers’ names is uniquely advantageous to the historian because the list on each memorial was actually compiled at the time, and therefore can be analyzed with the benefit of using parameters that were established with the war memorial when it was built rather than an arbitrary framework based upon our own contemporary valuations. While approximately half of the memorials built after the First World War in British Columbia had names engraved
on them, the examination of such memorials provides an insight into the community-
wide experience of grief not attainable through research directed at memorials in other
forms, specifically those that do not have the names of soldiers attached to them.

Throughout the war, and in the years immediately following, newspapers
published frequent articles that discussed events of the war, recounted experiences of
soldiers with details from letters written home from the front, repeatedly posted lists of
men who had joined the ranks, as well as discussed the activities of community members
on the home front as they supported the war effort. In describing how newspapers might
be of use to the historian in his study of Torontonians’ experience in the Great War, Ian
Miller argued, “when supplemented through the use of archival sources, newspapers
permit the creation of a vivid, accurate portrait of a city and its citizens, permitting the
historian to describe what the people believed.” As a means of providing context to the
construction of war memorials in Canadian communities after the First World War, and
gaining a deeper understanding of who the men were whose names were engraved on
each memorial, newspapers are invaluable to the historian. This is particularly relevant
with respect to this study as so frequently Canadian newspapers published information
about local soldiers who were overseas or had been injured or killed in battle. It is these
articles that allow for connections to be drawn between individuals and community, as
hints about their lives are gleaned from the papers, context can be built around the names
that are engraved on each of these memorials. These accounts often also included detailed
personal descriptions of what life was like at the front, or how battalions carried out
successful attacks on enemy lines.
During the war, there was an attempt to include the names of all men who had enlisted to date on service rolls. Individual churches, fraternal organizations, and schools, declared to all people who saw the rolls, the lists of names of each of their brave men who went ‘over there’. These service rolls, often compiled throughout the war prior to the enlistment of many of the soldiers who eventually joined the ranks in the later war years, left a fragmented picture of the landscape of war service in any given area. Unlike the memorials built after the war was over, these service rolls were used as a tool to encourage further enlistment, and a way to boast of the contribution of their respective group members to the war effort, but in no way provided any comprehensive information regarding the enlistment or death in action of local soldiers. Furthermore, their inherent purpose was not commemoration, and they therefore have been excluded from the focus of this study.

In an effort to gain a better understanding of the people who lived in the six communities that are the focus of this study, an analysis of the data from the 1911 and 1921 censuses have proven helpful. Many of the residents of Vancouver Island eventually enlisted as soldiers in the war, contributed to the effort on the home front in some way, or participated in the planning or construction of war memorials in their community after the war ended. In terms of the wider demographics such as age, gender, religion, occupation, birthplace and marital status, I will look at Vancouver Island as a whole while population statistics for each community will be considered individually. Looking at the demographics in this way allows for inclusion of rural residents who might have self-identified with and participated as members of a nearby community or multiple communities, but did not fit within the political boundaries of any single one. It also
allows for a more general understanding of the people of Vancouver Island without having to individually identify members of each community, or those who may or may not have moved between communities in the period between the 1911 and 1921 census.

In terms of populations for each of the communities that have a war memorial at the focus of this study, concrete statistics were somewhat difficult to determine as many of these municipalities were so newly (or yet to be) incorporated. I have endeavored to ensure that the population statistics for each of the communities were taken in the most comparable way possible; however, it is essential to remember that the foundation for these numbers will vary depending on whether municipal or regional data was available for the statistic in question.

For nearly a century historians have carefully examined many aspects of the Great War, the first writing of which emerged during the interwar period, while the aftermath of the war was still freshly forming in memory. Veterans and civilians wrote about their personal experiences and the effect the war had on Canadian society, often informally in memoirs, poetry, and letters. During the Second World War, and the decade immediately following, the writing of the Great War was somewhat idle; much of the historical research during this time was focused elsewhere. The historians that thereafter developed an interest in studying the Great War had not personally experienced life during that time; further removed from the conflict, they analyzed the war with objectivity not attainable in earlier years.

Similar themes emerged in the historical writing about the Great War, which explored the political characteristics of war, the successes of the military or the results of noteworthy battles. Many looked at the outbreak of war, enlistment trends, and the shift
in the nature of the battle as the war continued. Others also examined home fronts, recruitment statistics and the final end to a war that many initially believed would be over by the Christmas of 1914.¹⁶

There was then a shift of interest away from the more traditional military and political focused approach to the study of the Great War, which highlighted important figures and events, to that which looked at the social or cultural aspects. Recently, the study of the Great War has become more personal, taking the social history of the war and concentrating on the experiences of individuals.¹⁷ While the research of historians who prefer to focus on the experiences of ordinary soldiers do not examine their research so closely as to make known the stories of individual men, they do reveal insight into the broader war experience. This level of analysis can be used to understand what the average Canadian soldier endured during the Great War.

In terms of considering the experience of the soldier, *At Duty’s Call: A Study in Obsolete Patriotism* by W. J. Reader closely observes how the Great War inspired great enthusiasm and patriotism from the average person, many of whom previously had no connection to the military. Although this is a British study, many of the conclusions found within are easily transferable to the experience of those in Canada, such as the great numbers of volunteer soldiers, and mass communication’s effect on the home front. It is further relevant with respect to my work looking at the experience of Vancouver Island communities, as there were more British born and children of British born residents than many other localities in Canada. This was one of the first to look at the memorials of the Great War and the revealing public opinion concerning said memorials that were constructed to commemorate the soldiers who had lost their lives in the conflict. Reader
argued “they represent the community in the widest possible sense.” His study of patriotism in the British Empire during the Great War began with an exploration of the affect that the spirit of volunteerism and eager enlistment in the war had on the way that the fallen were commemorated on British war memorials.

With regard to memorials commemorating the soldiers of the Great War, a reading of Leonard Pomeroy’s “The Making of a War Memorial” provides an interesting framework for the contemporary understanding of war memorials and inspires a comparison between public perception at the time of erection and that nearly a century later. Pomeroy wrote this advisory piece to instruct towns affected by the Great War in how to obtain the best memorial for the least expense possible. This article is valuable for its revealing look at post-war opinion on the process of memorialization, albeit British again. Unlike the majority of historians who have since studied the commemoration of soldiers lost in the Great War, Pomeroy recognized that many people did not agree with the idea of war memorials. He quoted one such disbeliever as saying, “no man who deserves them needs them.” This raises provocative questions about the disparate value that society often places between the heroism of those who sacrificed their lives and those who safely returned from battle. In terms of how that perspective may have manifested within the process of memorialization, it is likely that communities whose sentiment leaned more in this direction would have created more utilitarian style war memorials, such as the clubhouse for returned soldiers in Courtenay, BC.

Comparably, J. M. Winter discusses the popular concept of the “lost generation” in Britain as a consequence of the casualties of the Great War. The myth, as Winter describes it, is that the heroes of war were whose who lost their lives in battle. This belief
was not because they had shown valour or strength of spirit in combat, and as a result could be considered heroic soldiers, but rather that the men who died were an immeasurable loss to British society for the role they may have played in the future of Britain. Believers of this theory thought, “men of higher social status were more likely to lose their lives in the war than were men of lower social status. The war was thus ‘dysgenic’ in that it stripped this country of the most ‘intelligent’, virile, and creative members of the younger generation. Although every war death was wasteful, the deaths of thousands of educated and privileged young men brought about what was called a ‘Lost Generation’ of future politicians, philosophers, and poets who never had the chance to fulfill their promise.” In this sense the process of memorialization seems appropriate, and the honour given to those lost in the war is the smallest accolade possible for the sacrifices they made. His viewpoint, however, regarding the disproportionate affect of war on those of higher social status was not supported to any extent in my research on memorialization processes. Not one of the memorials examined here makes note of rank, and the newspaper obituaries most commonly highlighted the soldier having been born in the community as key importance to mention, alongside any details available regarding the soldiers’ time at war.

In looking at the loss of a generation of men from the casualties of the Great War, Nathan Wise also presented a unique argument, suggesting that the working class men who enlisted as soldiers in the war did so for employment rather than patriotism. He also implies that the historiography of the Great War has a distinguishable omission; that many scholars have attempted to understand the experience of the soldier while at war without first attempting to be familiar with their lives before the war. To understand
where these men came from is important in the appreciation of what the individual soldier endured while at the front, a concept rarely considered by historians. It is on this foundational premise that the rationale for the contextual demographics and pre-war information about the soldiers detailed in this study rests. It is important, not only in the context of where the soldiers came from, but also what the loss meant for the communities who were left with nothing but a memorial to build.

To disclose the community foundation on which war memorials were erected, it is also necessary to explore the experience of the home front during the Great War. Robert Rutherdale considered this and looked at three Canadian cities to discover their perception of the Great War. It is striking that this book, entitled *Hometown Horizons: Local Responses to Canada’s Great War*, observed how each city dealt with the experience of war while the battles were still raging along the Western Front, yet no attention is paid to the effect that casualty lists had upon those at home. One expects that the loss of a large portion of a city’s young men in the war would have a profound impact at the community level; however, it was a related topic that was all but ignored by Rutherdale. This study of war memorials and the process of memorialization continues where Rutherdale’s work left off by looking at the collective experience of grief over the loss of local soldiers’ lives and the physical manifestation of that grief that became the community-built war memorial.

In a deeper investigation into the home front experience of the Great War, Ian Hugh MacLean Miller praises the city of Toronto for its commitment to victory. While this study is exhaustive and meticulous in its examination of the city of Toronto, it is precisely this praise of the city’s matchless contribution to the war effort that undermines
its usefulness for insight into the home front experience of other Canadian cities. There was considerable evidence throughout the local newspapers from Vancouver Island that demonstrated the way in which communities came together and supported the war in every way they found possible. Surely all communities, in their own right, felt their respective contributions vast and important.

Robert Shipley’s survey of a great number of Canada’s war memorials, from all wars in which Canadians fought, addresses some similar themes to my own research. This is true particularly with respect to the way in which communities collaborated on the erection of their war memorials, and the essential role played by women’s groups such as the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, which in one of the six Vancouver Island communities led the process of memorialization, including fundraising, planning and construction. Understandably, given the number of memorials his study covers, missing from Shipley’s work is an in-depth analysis of the personal side of war memorials; who they were meant to commemorate, how the community came to reach an understanding of their meaning, and the way in which those memorials stood as physical markers of memory in absence of the soldiers’ bodies who were not repatriated.

In Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War, Jonathan Vance discusses Canadian war memorials of all forms as physical expressions of the nation-building myth that emerged out of the First World War, and how that myth was a necessary coping mechanism to reconcile the immense casualties of that war. His work emphasizes repeatedly the way in which the process of memorialization and the creation of the myth of the war built of and from the Canadian people generally, not dictated by any level of government or influential people of Canadian society. The concept of the
war memorial emerging from the need of communities on the home front is also explored by Bart Ziino in *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves and the Great War.* This study has particular relevance to my work on the Vancouver Island war memorials, as it was posited by Ziino that the war memorials had somewhat amplified significance for those individuals and communities left mourning the loss of their local soldiers as a result of the incredible distance between “home” and the final resting places of the fallen in the fields of Flanders and France under the care of the Imperial War Graves Commission. Especially in the case of the Australian soldiers, there was little ability for families to conceive of making the trip to pay homage to their lost sons, husbands, brothers, or fathers. Although not nearly as distant, the communities on Vancouver Island that are the focus of this study faced a similar impediment via the distance to the front. Not surprisingly both localities experienced similar meaning through their process of memorialization after the First World War as a result of their distance from the fallen soldiers for whom they grieved.
Chapter 1: Community Profiles, Demographics, and Periods of Grief

Canadians on the home front learned about the details of the First World War through their local newspapers which published accounts that described the conditions at the front, the rates at which soldiers fell victim to injuries and death in service, detailed (if censored) narration of battles, and the geographical movement of troops to participate in those various offensives wherein Canadians played a leading role. Nearly every edition of any newspaper opened throughout the war years would have had some information about the fighting at the front. The Victoria Daily Times published one such article on August 15, 1916, quoting a communication from Ottawa that “the entire four Canadian divisions at the front have been transferred from the Ypres salient to the region of the Somme River, where the great British and French offensive has been in progress for a month and a half.”

Further articles printed in the weeks following would continually reinforce in the minds of Canadians the knowledge that their soldiers were involved in the heavy fighting as extensive casualty lists and details of achievements in battle were published. Newspapers across Canada, in cities large and small, regularly printed articles relaying the somewhat sanitized version of the experiences of the nation’s soldiers at war, what battles they were recently involved in, and, albeit later, the scale of loss following these.

The “suddenly increased casualty lists” that were also noted after such periods of heavy fighting contributed to the greater sense of grief at the loss of Canadian soldiers, particularly as the members of small communities began to recognize the names of so many of their local men. The periods during which people on the home front experienced such grief predictably correlated directly to large offensives in which
Canadians were involved. How communities on Vancouver Island experienced these periods of grief will be examined through the lens of the local newspapers which often provides greater insight into the lives of soldiers before they left for war, their connection to the community from which they left, and the details of their subsequent experiences. It is important to achieve an understanding of the landscape of home-front war experience prior to any examination of the process of memorialization in each of these communities. I will briefly survey the home front of the six cities in this study with respect to the loss of local soldiers; however, to do more would be unnecessary given that considerable historical attention has already been dedicated to such purposes. Rightly so, the experience of grief and the community members’ apparent intention to reconcile that grief with positive action, understandably drove the effort to erect war memorials and influenced the choices made regarding each memorial’s location, commemorative form, and respective meaning in post-First World War Canada.

As well as discussing the community-wide experience of grief, an examination of the way in which these six communities learned about the war that was raging in Europe, what was happening with their “boys” on the front, and the ways in which community members supported the war effort from home, is prudent. This narrative will weave naturally throughout the entirety of this study. Newspapers frequently published accounts of warm send offs of local battalions on their way to war, or subsequent praise for the efforts of these same battalions. Such articles wished a “hearty Godspeed to local militia company” and invariably depicted gatherings of local community members, friends and relatives who watched the soldiers parade through the town, listened to school children sing patriotic songs, and attended farewell receptions given by organizations
such as the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire who held one such reception at the Oddfellows Hall the night prior to the departure of a cohort of local Nanaimo soldiers in 1915. 30 Another article on August 19, 1915 spoke of the “hearty send off” of men headed to Vancouver to enroll with the 72nd Battalion (Seaforth Highlanders of Canada), including the son of Nanaimo’s Mayor Planta. 31 Frequently these articles were rich with optimistic language both praising the soldiers who were on their way overseas and simultaneously the communities who wholeheartedly supported their enlistment. In hindsight these articles have a tone of hopeful ignorance to the reality of the war, a reality that would soon be apparent as the war dragged on and casualty figures and obituaries featured ever more prominently.

On October 12, 1916, there was an article that gave praise for the “individual superiority of the Canadian soldier over the German soldier,” but then went on to say much later, “our men were gradually compelled to withdraw to the east and west until the whole position was evacuated.” 32 This switch in language within the limits of one article demonstrates that while the newspapers certainly provided details about all aspects of the war, these were often published in a positive light in an attempt to maintain support for the war effort on the home front and continue to encourage new enlistments. 33 Further into the article the editor may have revealed the darker details of the combat overseas, but this was certainly not their usual focus. This means that the public perception of the efforts of Canadian soldiers at war remained positive even through news of difficult periods because the focus of the news stories was placed upon the ‘successes’ achieved even in what today may be perceived as defeat. 34 The positive lens through which the war
was portrayed would have made the casualty lists that were subsequently published that much harder to reconcile for the people who remained on the home front.

There were countless ways in which community members on the home front experienced and supported the war effort during the First World War. These efforts have been written about extensively in the work of Robert Rutherford, Desmond Morton, and Ian Miller.\(^{35}\) Newspapers across Vancouver Island, and undoubtedly the rest of British Columbia and throughout Canada, detailed all aspects of support for the war by their respective communities. Opening a newspaper on any date of the First World War, you were sure to find such information, broadcast back to the community for a reason that is twofold: firstly, to praise those who had contributed however they were able, and secondly, to bolster further support for the war overseas. For example, on just one day in the *Comox Argus*, there were a handful of articles all depicting different ways that people in Courtenay were supporting the war. These ranged from the “Soldiers of the Soil,” involved in the campaign for greater production on farms, a plea to organize an “Oversea Correspondence Club” to write letters to brighten the lives of ‘the boys’ who were at war, and a recounting of a fundraiser at a local theatre which raised $100.15 to purchase cigarettes for the soldiers at the front by charging to see the film “France In Arms.”\(^{36}\) The concern that people on the home front showed for the war effort carried forward into the interwar years and would again be visible in the collective mourning for the loss of soldiers’ lives at war and the community-wide support for the process of commemoration that will be discussed in detail later.

Undoubtedly, grief was an emotion that touched nearly every English Canadian at some point throughout the First World War - and into the interwar period - as casualty
details were posted in local newspapers and communities began to realize just how many of their native sons would not be returning. After the war there was an interest by some in the compilation of provincial lists of war dead in an effort to commemorate all who gave their lives for the cause.\(^3\) The desire for such a list organized provincially was likely connected to a desire to quantify in some measurable way the contribution of British Columbians to the war. However, even if one were to attempt the exhausting task of compiling a comprehensive list of all British Columbians who died during the First World War, the attestation papers of soldiers list their place of birth, which was often somewhere in Britain, and their current residence at time of enlistment, which may or may not have been where they had spent most their lives.

It is easy to imagine, then, that trying to determine which soldiers would have been commemorated in any given community by using only the records left from attestation papers, casualty details and the Canadian Virtual War Memorial would understandably, yet unintentionally, miss many of those that the community at the time of memorial construction might have identified as their own. The official records from these soldiers then, leave a considerable gap in terms of each individual’s connection to community regardless of place of residence at the time of enlistment in the war. It is the engraved names on local war memorials that bridge this disconnect, and allow for a study of community-wide experience of grief and mourning that is locationally based.

As for the provincial war dead honour roll, the task of compiling the list of names eventually proved to be too cumbersome, not for lack of respect for the soldiers’ sacrifice, but rather the sheer volume of paperwork and organizational chaos that had to be overcome in order to collect such data. Surely, there would have been disagreement
regarding whose names would be included on the provincial list of war dead; would the soldiers’ attestation papers be separated based upon their place of birth or place of residence at time of enlistment? And what if only one of these addresses was British Columbian? The trouble with comprehensive lists such as these inevitably falls within the question of inclusion, and who should have authority over that process of history shaping.

The Canadian Virtual War Memorial does have the names of all soldiers throughout the country including those who enlisted in other British Empire forces; however, the database is not searchable in any way that allows for grouping based on the soldier’s hometown, or even province. As such, the lists of names of war dead on local memorials, where they exist, provide a unique window into the community-wide experience of grief that cannot be attained at such a personal level through any other method of research aside from individually sorting through the records from each of the more than 66,000 Canadian soldiers who sacrificed their lives.

The first community for which demographic context is explored is the small municipality of Chemainus, BC, located about halfway between Nanaimo (to the north) and Duncan (to the south), which was officially incorporated in 1858; an indigenous village had existed in the location for many years prior to its “founding”. Many of the town’s residents were employed in the forestry industry, which was centered around the sawmill that opened in 1862 and would support the town economy for over a century before it closed in the 1980s. The town of Chemainus is located within the census district of North Cowichan, which had a population of 2,664 as of 1921. The city directory of 1918 suggested that Chemainus proper had a population of approximately 500. The larger figure represents the people who resided in Chemainus, as well as those
living in surrounding rural areas and perhaps some of the city of Duncan. Duncan was closely connected to the census district of North Cowichan, and undoubtedly the boundaries of identification between these two communities within the census district would have been blurred. It is impossible to determine the number of citizens in the census district who should be attributed to each of Chemainus and Duncan. The city of Duncan was incorporated on March 4, 1912, only two years prior to the start of First World War, and as of the 1921 census it had a population of 1,178 people.\(^{42}\)

Courtenay was incorporated on January 1, 1915, a result of the culmination of efforts by community members to ensure that the incoming utilities of electric light, heat and power would be city owned, rather than in the control of a private company.\(^{43}\) Courtenay was just shy of 800 residents at incorporation, then just over that number at the time of the 1921 census; the nearby district of Cumberland had a population of 1,179, and Comox did not appear as a municipality in the census data until 1951, at which time it had a population of 714.\(^{44}\) These population statistics are listed in the interest of providing a contextual understanding of the Comox Valley, not for strict comparison with enlistment and casualty figures. In this area, as well as the others studied in this paper, it is important to keep in mind the flexibility in defining community, as residents who self-identify as members of the social group located in or near a given municipality, and certainly many of the self-identified community members, would have actually resided in a rural setting. As residents were asked to submit names of soldiers to be included on the war memorial, this aspect of self-identification is a key factor in their identification as community members, and it is for this reason that politically defined location boundaries are not used in this study.
Ladysmith was incorporated in 1904, only a decade before the beginning of the First World War. One of the main advocates for incorporation was John Coburn, who became the town’s first mayor. While Ladysmith was ethnically diverse, the largest portion of residents were of British descent; this 60% of the population, in order of their representation, consisted of Scots, English, Irish and “other”. John Hinde suggested that in smaller, close-knit communities such as Ladysmith, the social position of community members (especially amongst the British) relied less upon the preconceived notions of family status or wealth and more on the citizen’s “public service and commitment to the community.” Based upon the census of 1911, the representation of other ethnicities in the town of Ladysmith was about one-third ‘other Europeans’, with the remaining population consisting of a smaller number of African Americans and a greater proportion of First Nations peoples.

Although coal mining was undoubtedly the primary industry in this community, there was also a strong connection to Canada’s military history. The town’s founder, James Dunsmuir, who was also the owner of the Wellington Colliery Company, changed the name of the community when it was incorporated from Oyster Harbour to Ladysmith, which was a reference to a siege in the Boer War. The town was formed to support the coal industry and the families of miners. The danger of explosions, competition from the oil industry and the great strike of 1912-14 all contributed to the decline in production in the mine at Extension where most miners who lived in Ladysmith were employed. With working conditions such as these, and a declining coal industry, it is little wonder that so many of Ladysmith’s men eagerly enlisted in the war effort, and the town that so wholly
supported its mining industry soon rallied behind its men at war. The city of Ladysmith had a population of 3,500 at the close of the First World War.\footnote{50}

At the turn of the twentieth century, the city of Nanaimo was booming; in the later decades of the prior century the population increased from hundreds to over six thousand.\footnote{51} By the 1921 census, only a few years after the end of the First World War, there was a population of 6,304 people living within Nanaimo city limits, a figure which does not include those inhabiting surrounding rural areas who would have self-identified as living in Nanaimo.\footnote{52} The city was established and centered on the coal mining industry that had employed many residents since 1852, when a settlement was built around the newly discovered coal seams. In 1854 twenty-four mining families arrived from England, and in 1860 the settlement of Colvileton was renamed Nanaimo, an Anglicized version of the indigenous name Snuneéymuxw. When the Hudson’s Bay Company sold the mine and the town to the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company, a unique city plan was established, which was laid out in a radial pattern from the waterfront that mirrored the natural landscape in the area.\footnote{53} Nanaimo was incorporated in 1874 and enjoyed years of prosperity between 1881 and 1925 directly related to the abundance of high quality coal in the region.\footnote{54}

For the purposes of general demographic information about the people living on Vancouver Island at the beginning of the twentieth century, I have included data inclusively from all census districts that pertain to any areas of the island. It is important to note that these districts are not geographically bound to only Vancouver Island, but for some census years also include some areas of the ‘Sunshine Coast’, the mainland and the Haida Gwaii Islands up the western coast of British Columbia. The data included which
highlights the comparative demographics of the soldiers versus their peers specifically focuses on males 11-50 years of age during the 1911 census as compared to the data from the soldiers’ war records. Inclusion of data relative to the oldest and youngest population, as well as females, would unnecessarily skew the comparison and conceal the data that the tables are meant to show. The intention is to display the degree to which the soldiers whose names on these memorials are representative of their wider peer group. Not surprisingly, unmarried males were far more likely to enlist or be conscripted than their peers who were married. Men who worked in resource based and trades jobs prior to the war were overrepresented as soldiers relative to their proportion on Vancouver Island during the prior census. In terms of the religion of soldiers in comparison to all their male peers, followers of the Church of England and Presbyterians were more likely, and Confucians were disproportionately unlikely, to enlist or be conscripted as soldiers in the First World War.

**Table 1.1 Marital Status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MARRIED</th>
<th>SINGLE</th>
<th>UNKNOWN</th>
<th>WIDOWER</th>
<th>DIVORCED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOLDIERS</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.89%</td>
<td>84.26%</td>
<td>0.43%</td>
<td>0.43%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAN. ISL.</td>
<td>3819</td>
<td>9229</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28.80%</td>
<td>69.59%</td>
<td>1.03%</td>
<td>0.54%</td>
<td>0.05%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows the marital status of the soldiers whose names were engraved on the memorials as compared to the marital status of males aged 11-50 years as of the 1911 census.

**Table 1.2 Trade or Calling**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOLDIERS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.43%</td>
<td>8.09%</td>
<td>0.85%</td>
<td>2.55%</td>
<td>39.57%</td>
<td>22.13%</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
<td>15.32%</td>
<td>9.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAN. ISL.</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>4163</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>1065</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>4101</td>
<td>1006</td>
<td>1268</td>
<td>1186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.51%</td>
<td>31.39%</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td>8.03%</td>
<td>2.47%</td>
<td>30.92%</td>
<td>7.59%</td>
<td>9.56%</td>
<td>8.94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows the trade or calling of the soldiers whose names were engraved on the memorials as compared to the trade or calling of males aged 11-50 years of age as of the

Table 1.3 Religion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C. OF ENG</th>
<th>PRESBY</th>
<th>CATH</th>
<th>PROT</th>
<th>METH</th>
<th>BAPT</th>
<th>CONF</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOLDIERS</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51.49%</td>
<td>24.69%</td>
<td>7.23%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11.06%</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
<td>0.43%</td>
<td>2.13%</td>
<td>1.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAN. ISL.</td>
<td>4249</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>1372</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>2811</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32.04%</td>
<td>15.01%</td>
<td>6.86%</td>
<td>4.11%</td>
<td>10.65%</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
<td>21.20%</td>
<td>3.74%</td>
<td>2.35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows the religion of the soldiers whose names were engraved on the memorials as compared to the religion of males aged 11-50 years as of the 1911 census. Religions shown include: Church of England, Presbyterian, Catholic, Protestant, Methodist, Baptist, Confucian, Not Applicable, and Other, respectively.

Table 1.4 Gender and Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-10</th>
<th>11-20</th>
<th>21-30</th>
<th>31-40</th>
<th>41-50</th>
<th>50+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MALES</td>
<td>2214</td>
<td>2400</td>
<td>4969</td>
<td>3651</td>
<td>2242</td>
<td>1929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% OF AGE GROUP</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>54.36%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>66.81%</td>
<td>62.87%</td>
<td>58.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALES</td>
<td>2218</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2232</td>
<td>1814</td>
<td>1324</td>
<td>1396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% OF AGE GROUP</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>45.64%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>33.19%</td>
<td>37.13%</td>
<td>41.98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows the proportion of gender by age range of the entire population of the Vancouver Island census districts in 1911.

These statistics are meant as a contextual framework for understanding who the people were who went to war in Europe, and their peer group who supported the war from the home front, and participated in the process of memorialization in each of these six cities on Vancouver Island. Because of the geographical spread of census districts, it was impossible to determine these statistics individually for each of the small communities; however, the data would likely have been relatively similar as these statistics are representative of the average of all the districts within which these communities were located. This data is meant to provide a brief demographic understanding of who the people of Vancouver Island were during the First World War.
But it also speaks to the availability of soldiers for enlistment. If nearly double the proportion of the population who were, or would be, of age during the war were male than female, there was certainly no doubt that Vancouver Island should (and did) have a tremendous showing for these communities’ enlistment figures.\textsuperscript{55} Although as far from the Western Front as British Empire soldiers would be during this war (other than the Australians and New Zealanders) there were certainly men of Vancouver Island who were as quick as any to prepare to go off to the front. For example, Nanaimo residents demonstrated patriotically on August 4, 1914 upon news of the outbreak of war, and formed a militia unit only three days later. On August 9, 1914 there was already a contingent of sixteen leaving the city, and another four men left on August 21. Five of the twenty names from these early send-offs would later be engraved on the city’s war memorial cenotaph.\textsuperscript{56}

When looking at the dates on which soldiers from these Vancouver Island communities died during the First World War there were periods when the people on the home front were left to reconcile the sacrifice and loss of life of a greater number of local men than any other time throughout the war. On Vancouver Island, there were three such periods; these were late October to late November 1916, early April to early May 1917, and early September to early October 1918. Not surprisingly, these dates correspond to some of the worst battles that Canadian soldiers had a role in, and include the last days of the Battle of the Somme, the Battle of Vimy Ridge, and the last two major attacks of the Last Hundred Days (the battles of the Drocourt-Quéant Line and Canal du Nord), respectively. British Columbia was responsible for raising eight of the 50 infantry battalions, which served in the Canadian Corps, (in 1917, two of the original 48
battalions were dissolved, to be replaced by two others) a figure reduced from mid-1917 onward as the province’s manpower was depleted until by mid-1918 it stood at three. Half of the original eight served in the 4th Division. The Division entered the Battle of the Somme in early October 1916, suffered the heaviest losses of any Canadian division at Vimy Ridge in April 1917, and subsequently very high casualties during all three major battles of the Last Hundred Days campaign. The disproportionate representation of BC-raised battalions in the 4th Division definitely skewed their losses toward battles in which the 4th Division was heavily engaged. The people of Chemainus, Courtenay, Duncan, Ladysmith, Nanaimo, and Parksville, much like the people in any other town or city in English Canada, would have read about these battles in their local newspapers, talked about them with their friends and family, often with foreboding if they had friends or kin in the army, and strained to grasp the nature of the battle that was raging in Europe. A level of solemn comprehension would have been ultimately achieved as the casualty lists were released and the people in the communities at home recognized the names of local young men who had been killed at war. This is an experience that would have been shared in communities across Canada, and provides the basis for how individuals and communities began to conceptualize what their respective war memorials would look like.

The first one-month period during which the six communities on Vancouver Island in British Columbia experienced a higher concentration of deaths of local soldiers occurred during the Battle of the Somme in the fall of 1916. On October 21 and 25, 1916, the 102nd Battalion Canadian Infantry (Northern British Columbians) attempted unsuccessfully to take the Regina Trench from the German forces in the Somme River
Valley. Many of the soldiers whose names were engraved on Vancouver Island’s war memorials had enlisted with or were used to reinforce that battalion and as such many were also involved in this attempt on the Regina Trench. The 47th Battalion, another unit entirely raised in British Columbia (until well into 1917), was finally able to capture Regina and Desire Trenches on November 10 and 11, 1916. Again, a number of the soldiers from Vancouver Island were members of this battalion and were involved in these assaults. In fact, most of the nineteen fatal casualties during this period were lost during these two specific actions. An article published in the Victoria Daily Times on October 26, 1916, provided an eyewitness description of the successful offensives on Regina and Desire Trenches. The main text focused on the timeline of the advance and detailed how the Canadians effectively combined their experience (gained from three previous failed attempts) and skill to remain in “undisputed possession” of the position once they had seized it.58 Again, the attention was placed upon how effective the Canadian soldiers had been in carrying out their assignment; there was no hint of the numbers of casualties that would be learned in the following days by people on the home front. As official casualty lists were released, official telegrams began reaching next-of-kin.

Further information about many of the casualties who fell during this period can be gleaned from the local newspapers around Vancouver Island that often published obituaries of the soldiers hinting at their lives prior to war and highlighting any information they had on the soldiers’ war service. One of the nineteen Vancouver Island soldiers who was killed during this first period was William Halcrow, a 23 year old bank clerk who was born and raised in Cumberland. He died on October 22, 1916 and had only
enlisted on April 6 of the same year; Pte. Halcrow’s name is engraved on the memorial cairn that was built in Courtenay. His father, Robert Halcrow, was a Scottish coal miner who immigrated to Canada in 1889 with his wife Agnes. The family had fifteen boarders listed as residing in their family home according to the 1901 census, while Agnes was listed as having no occupation; presumably she was quite busy with the duties relating to her role as landlady. On November 1, 1919 *The Cumberland Islander* published a sentimental poem written by Agnes Halcrow, the soldier’s mother, to remember the sacrifices of her “brave boy.” An excerpt of the poem is as follows:

```
Somewhere in Flanders, or somewhere in France,
Somewhere, where only God knows,
There’s a grave where my laddie, my baby boy sleeps,
Sleeps, where the red poppy blows.
Now that the bloodshed, the struggle is ended,
And the boys march home again,
It seems, when I think that my boy is not coming,
My poor heart will break with pain.
With longing to see him, to hear him say “Mother,”
To touch his brown, curly hair,
To hear him come whistling, and laughing and singing,
The sound of his step on the stair.
```

On October 22, 1916, the same day that Halcrow died, a twenty-eight year old janitor named Robert McCourt of Nanaimo, BC was also killed in action, leaving behind a wife and small children. He was originally from Cumberland, England. The *Nanaimo Free Press* published the news of his death on November 6, 1916, the day after a telegram acknowledging it had been received by the soldier’s wife. George Patterson was killed on October 26, 1916, while working as a stretcher-bearer, and Edward Planta a few days later while serving as a machine gunner on the front. Edward Planta, a surveyor’s assistant and son of Nanaimo’s Mayor at the outset of war, and James Caldwell, a clerk, were both killed on November 1, 1916. Their parents back in their
hometown of Nanaimo were each notified by telegram on November 16, 1916. John Lucas, a miner from Cornwall, England, was killed on November 14, 1916 and left behind a widow and several children. Newspaper articles regarding all of these deaths were published around the island and most individuals in the extended communities linked to each of the soldiers would have learned about their fate in this manner.

On November 18, 1916, twenty-year-old James Wallace was killed while on the firing line, and twenty-one year old miner John Edwards the following day. Robert Hastie was killed on November 23, 1916; an article in the Nanaimo Free Press, which also notified the Nanaimo community of the soldier’s death, explained that Hastie had believed prior to leaving for war that his goodbyes would be forever, “yet he went forth as a gallant Briton should, prepared to lay down his life if necessary for the cause.”

Common themes throughout the newspaper announcements of such deaths included some combination of the following: regret for the loss of their life; sorrow for the mothers, wives and children of the deceased; kind words regarding their position in or contribution to their respective communities prior to the war; and a respectful goodbye with reference to the soldier’s gallant sacrifice of his life for the cause. An estimation given at the beginning of 1917 stated that there were nearly fifty-four thousand Canadian casualties in 1916, including those killed in action, wounded, missing, died of wounds, a sickness, and those presumed dead; the same article noted that there had been around sixty-eight thousand Canadian casualties in total since the war had begun.

The second period during which greater loss of life of Vancouver Island soldiers was experienced occurred during the attack on Vimy Ridge. The Battle of Vimy Ridge has been widely accepted in historiography as a coming of age event for English Canada
in demonstrating the country’s worth as a nation through the valiant efforts of its soldiers on April 9-12, 1917. All four of the divisions of the Canadian Corps fought together for the first time in order to successfully capture the German defensive position on the ridge. The attack was a “meticulously planned assault that secured more ground, took more prisoners, and captured more German artillery pieces than any previous British offensive on the Western Front.” One of the first articles from the *Victoria Daily Times* about the attack was published on April 10, 1917, and hopefully suggested that the projected estimates of casualties were heavier than the reality that unfolded in the offensive. The communities would experience the death of twenty-five local men during this period, and furthermore, while the offensive has generally been regarded as a great success, there would in fact be a great number of casualties revealed in the days following the attack.

When reflecting on casualty lists that were periodically published in local newspapers during the First World War, the *Nanaimo Free Press* on May 14, 1917 referenced the “already long list of locally popular young men who have given their all for the cause.” One of these soldiers was thirty-year-old teamster Joseph Beck who was killed on the first day of the Battle of Vimy Ridge but had, as was often the case, initially been reported as missing; Beck’s father did not find out until May 14 that his son had actually been killed in action. Joseph Beck grew up in South Wellington, a rural area of Nanaimo, where his widowed father James Beck farmed. The father had emigrated from Scotland in 1853 and fathered seven children with his late wife. At the time of the 1901 census, 16-year-old Joseph Beck was still working on the family farm with his father. The Becks boarded four additional people in their home; two coal miners, a teacher, and a labourer who also helped with the farm work. Arthur Davidson, who was born in
England, had also initially been reported as missing, but was later reported as killed during the Battle of Vimy Ridge. He had been one of those first soldiers to leave from Nanaimo in August of 1914. Alex Swanson – whose nickname was Sandy, William Pollard – a school teacher, James H. Watson – a clerk who left behind a wife and daughter, George Strath – a teamster from Aberdeen, Scotland, James “Mickey” Gowland – a painter from Nova Scotia, and David Hoggan – a farmer and lumberman - were some of the soldiers about whom the local newspapers wrote notices advising each community of their recent death in service.

James Watson was born in Great Britain, and had emigrated with his mother in 1894 when he was only seven years old; his father, also James Watson, had come to Canada the year prior. The community of Nanaimo received notice on May 7, 1917 that Lance-Corporal William Waddington had recently been wounded, and his left arm amputated; it was later learned that he had already died the previous day. He too was one of the men in that inaugural contingent to leave from Nanaimo in August 1914. In all, there were twenty-five soldiers from these six communities who were killed in action, or who died as a result of wounds, during the one-month period from April 8 – May 6, 1917.

The final period of the First World War during which there were a greater number of soldiers from Vancouver Island who lost their lives occurred between early September 1918 and early October 1918. These dates correspond with the middle of the battles referred to as the Last Hundred Days, which included three major and several lesser actions by the Canadian Expeditionary Force between August 8, 1918 and November 11, 1918. Twenty soldiers from the six communities in this study were killed during this period, which would have resulted in a heightened feeling of grief as the
names of local men appeared in the casualty lists again and again. Furthermore, the
timing of this last period with its much higher than normal rates of loss occurring as it did
so near the end of the war, would have amplified the feeling of grief that eventually
served as the motivation to begin the process of memorialization in each of these
Vancouver Island communities in the years immediately after the conflict.

Private John Quinn of Nanaimo was one of the local soldiers killed in the Last
Hundred Days Campaign, on September 3, 1918. A notification of his death in service
published in the *Nanaimo Free Press* less than a week after his death spoke of the
commendable speed with which the soldier had proceeded to France after a short training
period in England, and his popularity in the Nanaimo community prior to the war.\(^\text{75}\) His
father, Michael Quinn, was a coal miner born in Ireland who had emigrated in 1887; his
mother was Scottish and had emigrated in the same year.\(^\text{76}\) Robert Walter Francis Price
was killed in France on September 27, 1918 near Bourlon Wood. During his military
service, the Lieutenant had earned a Military Cross for distinguished actions in battle.\(^\text{77}\) Price lived in the rural area of Errington and was subsequently honoured on the Parksville
war memorial. The communities of Chemainus and Duncan are located very close to each
other on Vancouver Island. Ernest Arthur Cathcart, a soldier who was also killed during
this period on September 28, 1918, has his name engraved on the memorial in both
localities. Because community members were asked to submit names of local men who
had sacrificed their lives to be engraved on their local memorial, it is likely that Cathcart
had deep connections to both the Chemainus and Duncan communities, resulting in his
dual commemoration. In general, however, the communities made a concerted effort to
only “claim” those soldiers for commemoration whom they felt had a sufficiently strong
local connection. An example of this deliberate intention can be seen in an article published in the local newspaper, the Comox Argus, on March 30th, 1922:

Below we give a list which has been handed in to us of all the names as those as entitled to have their names engraven on the granite block which is to carry their memory down through the years to come. After mature consideration it has been decided that this district has [the] right to claim those whose home was in this district, even if they did not enlist here, and conversely that it had no right to the honored dead who enlisted or trained here but had no other affiliation with the Comox Valley.

It is proposed that on the monument the names and initials shall only be given; rank or fortune does not and should not count when all gave all they had pro patria. But for our records we should like the unit they served with and the place and date when they joined the great army of those who have died for their country’s sake.

Duplication of names occurred more than once in the six memorials examined, and likely on other memorials in Canada that have names engraved as well. The fact that some soldiers were commemorated in more than one community reinforces the idea that the soldiers’ names were more important as identifiers as members of that particular community than for the sake of commemorating the soldier as an individual. The choice to engrave the soldier’s name on the memorial was about the process of memorialization, the reconciliation of grief for the sacrifice of each soldier’s life, and the collective act of commemoration in each community.

Milford Devlin was a native son of Nanaimo who was killed in France on September 28, 1918 and he is commemorated on the memorial cenotaph in Dallas Square in downtown Nanaimo. Milford Devlin’s father Henry Devlin was a coal miner in Nanaimo who had emigrated from Great Britain in 1884. His wife Martha had followed a year later. They had seven children together; six boys and one girl. Archibald Bushfield was also from Nanaimo and was killed in France on September 30, 1918, two days after Milford Devlin. Archibald’s father Joseph Bushfield was a carpenter. Joseph and wife
Margaret had moved the family from Ontario around 1900, and had six children together, three boys and three girls. Harold Cochran, from the rural area of Cedar just outside of Nanaimo, was killed on September 30, 1918. These three soldiers would be honoured with their names engraved on the memorial built in Nanaimo.

Another Nanaimo soldier, named Thomas Stewart, was reported wounded and missing as of September 29, 1918; the newspaper wrote that it was believed that he had been taken prisoner, but records show that he had been killed in action on the following day. Thomas Stewart came from a mining family. His father Thomas senior and mother Lavinia were originally from Nova Scotia and Great Britain, respectively; they were a young family with only two small boys at the time of the 1901 census. On October 18, 1918, the same day that Stewart’s family was notified that he had been reported wounded and missing, the family had received a letter from him in which he spoke of his enjoyment of life at the front. This letter also relayed that he was not looking forward to returning to regular civilian life - the cruelty of war ensured he would never have to.

Parksville native son Charles Robert Reeves Hickey, an aviator who had received the Distinguished Flying Cross for his service earlier in the war, was killed in action on October 3, 1918. His father was an Irishman who had been born in India, and had immigrated to Canada in 1892; his mother was also Irish and had immigrated to Canada one year later. Charles’ father had worked in Vancouver to help implement the new Military Service Act (overseas conscription); he was notified on October 7, 1918 of his son’s death in France. Hickey’s name can be found on the memorial built in Parksville. The Distinguished Flying Cross received by Lt. Hickey was awarded on August 3, 1918,
exactly two months before he died. The citation accompanying his award described Hickey as:

A very determined air fighter who has destroyed seven enemy machines and brought down nine completely out of control during the past three months. His skill and initiative as a flight commander have made his flight very successful. Last month he destroyed two machines and brought down two more out of control in one day, and the remainder of his flight, at the same time succeeded in dispersing several more enemy aircraft without sustaining any casualties.  

Paul Richards, another Parksville soldier, also died in service on October 3, 1918; he had been awarded the Military Cross for gallantry in May 1917 and won a second one (the ‘bar’ to the award) the following March; his name is engraved on the Parksville memorial.

The periods during which there was a marked rise in the rate of loss among local soldiers experienced by these communities provides a window into a shared experience of people on the home front, not just in the communities at the focus of this study, but across Canada and throughout the Empire. During these periods, which logically related to the dates of some of the worst offensives in which Canadian soldiers, and in particular British Columbia units, participated, the people of Chemainus, Courtenay, Duncan, Ladysmith, Nanaimo, and Parksville confronted the task of reconciling their grief over the loss of their local men who had gone off to war. While the sheer scale of casualties for this war is impressive in its own right, and in no way is the intention to downplay the importance of such collective sacrifice, it is difficult to comprehend the impact of these thousands of casualties on their respective communities unless one considers them on an individual basis. This collective reconciliation would eventually manifest itself in the process of commemoration that was developed in each respective community, and
eventually lead to the erection of their local war memorials and the engraving of ‘their’ soldiers’ names to be respectfully remembered for generations to come.
Chapter 2: Memorialization, Canadian Memorials, and Western Front Monuments

Throughout the First World War, more than 66,000 Canadians sacrificed their lives for their country and the Empire.\textsuperscript{86} Names of casualties were published in local newspapers as families were notified, communities collectively mourned for the loss of these brave young men, and plans were made for the erection of war memorials to be built in their honour. There were times throughout the war during which Canadian soldiers played a particularly integral role in the conflict. Not surprisingly, the casualty lists being published back home reflected this Canadian involvement. Both the casualty reports and the more detailed obituary style pieces in the newspapers were the context in which community members participated in the process of memorialization in each of these communities on Vancouver Island, and undoubtedly across Canada and the Western world after the First World War. This context was further combined with community members’ understanding of the landscape of memorialization that existed prior to, during and after the First World War, to shape each community’s impression of what their war memorial should be.

The names reported in the newspaper casualty lists were later engraved in stone on locally built war memorials. When looking at the memorials that were erected on Vancouver Island after the First World War, a variety of memorial forms emerged as an expression of the collective grief of community members in any given area. These forms were comparable to other memorials raised throughout Canada in the same period, and included, but were not limited to, cenotaphs, cairns, statues, memorial buildings, arches and street names. Bart Ziino, in his book entitled \textit{A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves and the Great War}, explained that “the term ‘cenotaph’ was often applied to war
memorials - regardless of their particular form - to imply that the memorial indeed represented an empty tomb." It is the memorials that have engraved on them the names of soldiers who gave their lives in the war, however, that I am particularly interested in examining.

Throughout the British Empire, after the First World War, there emerged a proliferation of war memorials, which were varied in design, form, and dedication. Of all the memorials built on Vancouver Island during this period, there are six that have on them the names of soldiers that also meet the criteria outlined further in the next section. These memorials are located in the communities of Chemainus, Courtenay, Duncan, Ladysmith, Nanaimo and Parksville. For many years, historians have endeavored to understand how individuals and groups made sense of the incredible loss of life experienced during the First World War. These historians have studied war memorials indirectly, through such topics as commemoration, memory, mourning, and place. Rarely, however, have the names of the soldiers that were engraved on some of these memorials been used as a foundation for further research. Yet no other aspect of the war memorial’s form provides a window to such depths of information as the names of soldiers compiled from each community and engraved in stone for observance by their contemporaries and generations yet to come.

There were many provincial and federal commemorative initiatives and ideas that were put forth throughout the First World War, all with the intention of preserving the memory of British Columbia and Canada's participation in this conflict. One such initiative was put forth by the Canadian government’s own War Records Office. Seeking records to “compile a complete history in photograph of the Canadians’ share in the war,”
the office went on to say, “it is particularly desired to obtain photographs of all officers, N.C.O.’s and men who have served or are now serving in the Overseas Military Forces of Canada, and it is requested that an appeal should be made to this end through these columns.” The idea to compile a record of this magnitude was incredibly ambitious when one considers the technology that was scarcely available at this time and the fact that every record submitted through the mail to the War Records Office would have to be individually sorted by hand. The call for records using the primary newspaper of the province's capital city, the *Victoria Daily Times*, and presumably papers published in other capital cities across Canada, demonstrates the degree to which this media was relied upon for communication with citizens throughout the country. Furthermore it was common for newspapers in smaller communities to borrow much of their news content from larger centers and re-publish it the following day, a process that also commonly happened in reverse.

In terms of preparation for memorialization efforts after the First World War would end, the Board of Trade in Victoria requested that the provincial government establish a “war memorial committee, whose duties shall be the collection of relics, preparation of a complete roll of honour, and the securing of data in regard to enlistment and memorials of all descriptions, and the work of British Columbians in connection with both the present and the South African war.” Jay Winter wrote that war memorials were a place of individual and collective grief, asserting that, “to understand war memorials is to see more clearly how communities mourned together during and after the Great War.” The erection of war memorials on the home front sought to reconcile the grief
felt, particularly as it was learned that the bodies of soldiers would not be repatriated back to Canada. Winter further asserts that the "local war memorials arose out of the postwar search for a language in which to reaffirm the values of the community for which soldiers had laid down their lives."92

In attempting to understand the meaning of memorials that were built after the First World War in Canada, it is useful to also consider Alex King’s work, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The Symbolism & Politics of Remembrance*. Canada’s post-First World War memorial landscape developed in much the same way as that in Britain. King argued “to make adequate sense of memorials to the Great War, we need an approach to symbolism which does not purport to reveal the underlying meaning of symbols, but describes the process by which people came to see meaning in them.”93 He emphasized that commemoration of the soldiers who gave their lives in the war was a “collective creative activity,” and further that the public did not “consume” this aspect of culture but rather they created it through their participation in what I have called the process of memorialization.94

In the same way that King was interested in the "process of interpretation"95 as the way in which meaning was applied to symbols used in commemoration, my work places emphasis on the process of memorialization where, as community members developed the plans for design and placement of each memorial, meaning was expressed through each choice. King makes the case that, in Britain at least, the discussions of “purpose and meaning” for construction of war memorials were primarily morally or politically driven, denouncing any sort of expression of grief or the like as a motivator for
memorial construction. This is where I diverge from his argument. Later I will demonstrate that in these small Canadian communities on Vancouver Island politics and morality were not significant factors in the choice of memorial form as was suggested by King, rather the memorials were a symbolic representation of the men who did not return from war, and their relationship to their community and country at large.

When discussing the process of memorialization and the commemorative activities of communities in Canada, a shift in the way Canadians observed Armistice Day, or later Remembrance Day, is significant. In her book *Mothers of Heroes, Mothers of Martyrs: World War I and the Politics of Grief*, Suzanne Evans discussed the amendment of the Armistice Day Act, whereupon the date of observance was changed to the 11th of November, as well as the name of the commemorative day to be changed to Remembrance Day. The change of name denotes a shift in importance, from a national holiday that places importance on the anniversary of the date on which the Armistice was signed and was inherently celebratory in nature, to a national holiday during which honour is given to the efforts of Canadian soldiers while serving overseas, both those who returned from war, as well as those whose bodies were buried in the Imperial War Graves Commission Cemeteries overseas. It was more important to remember the efforts and sacrifices of thousands of soldiers than the anniversary of a political date; this became evident through the memorialization movement after the war and the commemorative ceremonies that were planned around the community war memorials each year.

The memorials that have engraved on them the names of soldiers, such as those that are the focus of this study, as well as the numerous rolls of honour, and the efforts to
compile a complete record of the efforts of individual Canadian soldiers in the war, are important to consider as the practice of individually recognizing the names of all soldiers was new to this war. Never before had common soldiers been recognized in this way. Bart Ziino, in *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves And The Great War*, expressed the sentiment behind the preservation of the names of soldiers in a way that should not be paraphrased, stating that “where they do not stand over bodies, the names stand for bodies, for the individuals lost to their loved ones, and in this the dead have something of equality. Those who mourned over them experienced a different kind of equality, as none had a body over which to grieve.”

After the First World War, communities across the home front set to work to begin their process of commemoration, the planning stages for the eventual erection of their local war memorial. What these communities lacked as a central factor in their mourning process were the dead. The absence of the bodies of the soldiers served as a greater incentive for the community members to work together to ensure that a memorial would be erected, and that it would happen sooner than later. Not only were the memorials a commemorative focal point for the grief expressed at the loss of soldiers' lives during the First World War, but they also continued to serve as such a meeting point even as the focus shifted from grief to commemoration and remembrance as time passed and the memory of the war drifted further and further from the collective experience of Canadians.

The construction of war memorials at the local level in Canada, and throughout the rest of the Empire, was the primary means of commemoration after the war. War memorials stood as an embodiment of community in each locality, and complimented the
more official remembrance that was organized nationally. Their purpose was compelling as a visual representation of grief and a geographically present reminder of the war dead buried far away on the Western Front. This view underscores the importance of understanding the commemorative efforts of smaller communities across Canada, reinforcing that the memorials built by these communities did not occur in isolation from one another, but rather, were a part of a larger commemorative movement that had many levels of memorialization, that together served to honour the sacrifices of the soldiers from Canada who gave their lives in the First World War. These memorials would invariably be unveiled with a community-attended ceremony and a familiar program with speeches, prayers, and anthems and hymns, followed usually by a dedication and a wreath laying.

Memorial ceremonies were not reserved for only after the war was over. For example, a tree-planting ceremony was held at Victoria High School in the capital in commemoration of the soldiers of the school who fell in the war and the ceremony was set to coincide with the two-year anniversary of the Battle of St. Julien which occurred at Ypres on April 22, 1915. The tree planting on the school grounds was meant to be the starting point for future commemoration, with the intention of erecting a permanent memorial to be nearby at a later date. There was no evidence of a subsequent memorial being erected. The ceremony was organized by the Women's Canadian Club, and included music by the school children and the band of the 5th (Militia) Regiment, addresses by the Premier of British Columbia, Harlan Brewster, and by Reverend Captain Campbell, as well as the planting of the trees that would commemorate the men who fell in the Ypres battle.
The ceremony also included the planting of one tree specifically dedicated to the memory of Lord Kitchener that would be placed in a prominent position. This particular aspect of the ceremony was unlike the other ceremonies for memorial unveilings on Vancouver Island, as it was unusual to specifically identify one high-ranking officer aside from the collective. The preferred practice was to remove any identification of rank when commemorating many soldiers together. This is not to say there were no memorials dedicated to individuals on Vancouver Island, elsewhere in British Columbia or in Canada, but rather that when individuals were celebrated for their exceptional service, it was rarely alongside those memorials commemorating local soldiers in the collective. Later news articles described that the tree planting ceremony was well attended, drawing nearly 2,500 citizens, and gave further description of the procession and details of ceremony. The trees planted, for example, were all maples except for the one tree that was planted for Lord Kitchener, which was an oak (a traditional symbol of England and personal strength), again, a distinction that was rare. In demonstration of the degree of consideration put into decisions made for what form war memorials should take, and the importance of symbolism in such memorials, the trees were meant to be representative of the boy students of the high school who used to gather in the same area, but now rested in the fields of France and Belgium. The trees would stand tall and proud, growing into adults where the schoolboys never would.

There are two memorials that were built in Esquimalt and one from the gulf islands near Vancouver Island that nearly meet the criteria I have set in this study. For this reason, these three deserve mention and brief detail. The first was conceived of during the war, when Esquimalt expressed the intention of constructing a war memorial
with names engraved upon it, those names to include both those soldiers who sacrificed their lives in the war, as well as all those from the area who had enlisted and returned safely. It was indicated in the newspaper that responsibility would be placed upon the members of the community to submit names to be considered for the memorial, and the names would be separated on the basis of whether or not the soldier survived the war. The memorial was built in the form of a tablet at the entrance to the St. Paul's Anglican Church, and completed in 1917. The reasons that this first memorial does not meet the requirements outlined in this examination are threefold. Firstly, because the memorial was completed before the war was over, it naturally excluded the names of soldiers who would have otherwise been included in the commemoration. Secondly, it did not distinguish between those soldiers who had died in service, but rather listed all those soldiers who left from the community to go to war and as such acted more as a measure of enlistment and contribution than an expression of collective grief. Lastly, the memorial form as a tablet at the entrance to a church is not comparable to the others in this study. While undoubtedly there are countless memorial tablet rolls of honour from this period, the sheer numbers would make the attempt at a comprehensive comparison futile.

The second memorial that nearly meets the criteria for consideration was also erected in Esquimalt. This memorial shaft was unveiled on September 8, 1927 in honour of those men who lost their lives in the First World War. From this brief description one would think that the memorial in Memorial Park in Esquimalt fits perfectly with the other memorials of this study; however upon closer inspection it is revealed that the plaque with the list of soldiers who died during the First World War was not added to the memorial until 1993. Because the list of names was not placed on the memorial within
the interwar period, it precludes this second memorial from logical inclusion in this study. The intention behind the list of names of soldiers being placed on the shaft would be inherently different simply by virtue of the sixty-plus-year gap between the initial construction and the later addition of names.

The final memorial that nearly met the criteria for inclusion in this study was built on Salt Spring Island at Ganges Harbour. While the National Inventory of Canadian Military Memorials (NICMM) has no further information about it, there was an article published at the end of September 1917 that described the district known as “The Islands” constructing what they called a war shrine in honour of those soldiers who had already died in the war. At the time that this article was printed, there were 256 names already inscribed on the tablet, with the intention to add more names as it became necessary.104

This memorial was fashioned after the similar one erected in Esquimalt in the same year, and is likewise excluded from this study on the basis of form and the time during which it was built - before the war had ended. Without further information from the NICMM, it is unclear when the additional names were added to the shrine as more soldiers fell near the end of the war, or indeed, if those names were added at all.

At the same time as communities on the home front were starting to form their commemorative plans and shape their own ideals regarding how best to remember those soldiers who would never return from war, the war office in Britain was conceiving how to regulate and care for the graves of soldiers whose bodies were to remain on the Western Front. At the end of October 1916, the government of Canada received a memorandum that explained to Canadians that the “French government offered to maintain these cemeteries. The British government, however, in agreement with it,
undertakes to provide for their maintenance in perpetuity and has appointed a national commission to care for the graves of our officers and men of the war.”

If the soldiers' bodies were not to be repatriated, people on the home-front would need a focal point for their mourning process; and the shift of this from the soldier's body to the community-built memorials likewise relocated the mourning from the private to the collective.

In discussing the “proud burial place” of British Columbia soldiers on Vimy Ridge, the *Victoria Daily Times* wrote that:

> One knowing the British Columbia of bygone days stops to look at these graves. It is the old British Columbia that leaps to the mind with great stretches of unbroken forest. If one had his way he would plant this Vimy Ridge with trees brought from British Columbia and let these men, when the present wooden crosses are replaced by a noble and permanent monument, rest under the shadow of a grove of their own pines, firs, and cedars.

The wish to have soldiers' graves planted near trees that grew naturally in the land from which the deceased came demonstrates the importance of the connection to place in the traditions of both the memorialization of soldiers, and the marking of graves in cemeteries across the Western Front.

### Table 2.1 Military Experience

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*This table shows the military experience of the soldiers whose names were engraved on the memorials as compared to the military experience of the males aged 11-50 years as of the 1911 census. It is important to note that the soldiers who were conscripted through the Military Services Act of 1917 were in no way distinguished as such on each of these memorials. It is further important to note that the prior military experience as noted from the 1911 census only reflects those who listed the military as their current occupation as of the census taking, and as such is not wholly representative of all male citizens who may have had military experience in 1911.*
What is interesting in English-speaking countries about the way in which names were collected for the inscription lists was that it was “a local and voluntary activity; nobody thought of involving the army or the ministry of defence or any other agents of the state.”\textsuperscript{107} Perhaps it is for this reason that very few of the memorials in Canada distinguish between those soldiers who willingly went forth to war and those who were conscripted under the Military Services Act after 1917. The call for names to be inscribed on memorials was also in stark contrast to the involvement of the French government in all aspects of post war-memorialization, where the National Assembly in France was subsidizing the construction of war memorials across the country after the First World War, which resulted in congruous memorials in terms of design, form, and even inscriptions of dedication.

In terms of using war memorials as a source of reflection for the sentiment of individuals and communities who were seeking to reconcile the immense loss of life after the First World War, memorials in British countries, it was further argued by Inglis, proved of far more value. This worth rests in the structure of the memorialization movement in each respective country; while French memorials invariably were inscribed with “monuments aux morts” or “pour nos enfants,” in Canada the decision of which words to inscribe on each war memorial rested with the local committees who had been responsible for the entire process of memorialization from conception and fundraising to construction and unveiling. Community members involved in the memorial construction were able to draw upon an innate history of commemorative traditions, bible verses, and literature after reaching a consensus of feeling regarding what words would most accurately honour the sacrifices of their local soldiers.\textsuperscript{108}
Local newspapers became the most inclusive source throughout the war years in listing all those in uniform, updating at regular intervals the names of all local men who had enlisted in the war effort as of the most recent date. These lists also included updates regarding any injuries that soldiers had incurred as well as notifying community members about which soldiers were missing or had already sacrificed their lives. Although the names of nearly all servicemen who enlisted can be found in the community newspapers, it is the memorials that created a fundamental reflection of the collective sentiment of community members in the years immediately following the First World War, specifically those which were engraved with the names of the men who never returned from the front.

The newspapers do, however, demonstrate the response of a community regarding the way to honour the sacrifices of their local men who were killed in service, at times providing insight into the process of planning and the timeline of community dialogue regarding commemoration. Logically, not all of the discussion for memorialization choices would have been recorded in the newspapers; however, close reading certainly reveals hints as to the collective sentiment. In addition to this insight directly related to the memorial construction, newspapers were also the place for up to date information about Canada’s contribution to the war effort, both home and abroad, publication of letters from local soldiers, and news regarding the lives of these soldiers, following them from enlistment, through training camps, time spent at the front, recuperation from injuries, and their return from the war or death in service. From these various war-related articles published in local newspapers, a greater understanding of the lives of soldiers, their families, and the others they left behind both before and after the
war can be gleaned, and as a result, a broader foundation for viewing the community-wide experience of grief and mourning after the First World War and the subsequent process of memorialization in each community.

At times, the newspapers reported on proposals regarding the form and intended meaning of war memorials, published discussions that supported or rejected such proposals, and put out the call for information about which men should be honoured on the memorial. In this way, the responsibility for inclusion of soldiers’ names was placed upon community members, often with an editorial piece in the paper calling for submissions to be made to the city clerk. The newspapers were an integral supplement to the person-to-person exchange of ideas concerning memorialization and commemoration after the First World War. The newspapers also published honour rolls that listed the men from the area who had gone to war, and many of the names from each memorial can be found on such lists.

While only Courtenay and Nanaimo had newspapers of their own, the Comox and Victoria newspapers also covered local topics such as recruitment efforts, the death of soldiers at war, and in later years, the construction of memorials in regional areas of Vancouver Island. The information about the four smaller communities can therefore be found in the newspapers of their larger neighbours. It is important to here note, however, that considerable focus will be placed on the Courtenay and Nanaimo war memorials. This attention is the result of natural breadth of research available in communities having their own local newspapers, but every attempt was made to obtain comparable information elsewhere for the smaller communities and their respective war memorials.
The lists of soldiers published in newspapers provide valuable insight into the earlier lives of many of the men whose names are engraved on the memorials. At times, complete articles were written providing information about only a couple of soldiers, including everything from where their parents lived, and where they worked prior to the war, to the general positive sentiment the community felt for each young man. While the newspapers were crucial in the information-sharing process prior to actual construction of memorials after the First World War and can be a valuable source of insight with regard to the soldiers’ lives, they were simply a means of conveying the public discourse regarding each memorial construction. Similarly, as we look back to examine these newspapers, it is important to note that while they contain valuable information regarding the lives of each soldier and the community’s home front experience, the information found within would remain meaningless were it not for the connective framework provided by the list of names on the memorials. That framework provides a structure in which to view the community’s experience of grief that is reflective of their values and was contemporary to the actual time during which each memorial was constructed.

Through the lens of the war memorial, it will be possible to examine the community-wide experience of mourning and loss after the First World War as expressed through the creation and dedication of memorials. Logically, this also involves the topics of commemoration, memory and place, as discussion of what forms the memorials took, what they meant for the community, and where they were built is equally important to the memorialization process. This conceptualizing, building and commemoration of memorials will be further referred to as the “process of memorialization.” Through the examination of the war memorials that have engraved on them the names of local soldiers
who lost their lives in the First World War, a greater insight into the home front experience of grief can be achieved. This grief has been discussed in the previous chapter with reference to the periods during which there was a higher concentration of casualties of local soldiers, and in the following how that grief was translated into the names engraved in stone will be examined. But first an exploration of other Canadian war memorials and those erected on the Western Front will set the landscape of commemoration for this discussion.

Memorials and monuments were built across the Western Front that collectively honoured all soldiers of the Empire for their sacrifices. This commemoration reflected the collaborative efforts of the soldiers throughout the war, with all Empire soldiers who were killed in each battle site honoured side by side regardless of their respective nationality. There were, however, also monuments built specifically to honour the efforts of Canadian soldiers on the Western Front, which will be briefly discussed in the following with reference to their form, meaning, and the significance of each location that warranted the construction of a memorial.

During the First World War, there was a bend in the German line of defence around the city of Ypres in Belgium known as the Ypres Salient. In an effort to remove this salient, in April 1915 the German army employed chlorine gas against the Canadian troops. There is a monument bearing a dedication to those 18,000 Canadian soldiers who fought and 2,000 who died during these first gas attacks at the hands of the Germans. The monument is located in the nearby village of St. Julian just northeast of Ypres (now Ieper). Carved into the top of a 35-foot-tall solid granite column is a soldier with his head bowed and hands clasped in prayer, this poignant design clearly depicting the feeling of
The Brooding Soldier which Veterans Affairs Canada describes as a "meditat[ion] on the battle in which his comrades displayed such great valour." Canadian architect Frederick Chapmen Clemesha, who had served and was wounded in the First World War, designed this memorial; his work was unveiled on July 8, 1923.

The Canadian Corps suffered 8,430 casualties at Mount Sorrel near Ypres. The Hill 62 (Sanctuary Wood) Canadian Memorial is large block of white Quebec granite surrounded by a vast green lawn and beds of roses. The Canadian forces had lost Hill 61 and 62 on June 2, 1916 as a result of "the fiercest bombardment yet experienced by Canadian troops," yet Lieutenant-General Sir Julian Byng was not prepared to give up on the positions. Eleven days later, on June 13, 1916, the 1st Canadian Division successfully regained both hills, which remained in British possession until the German Army took them back during their offensives in the spring of 1918.

The Courcelette Canadian Memorial in the Somme River region in France is dedicated to the bravery of the Canadian soldiers who were involved in the Canadian portions of the Battle of the Somme. These engagements were bloody and hard fought over a period of eleven weeks and gained the Canadians a "reputation as hard hitting shock troops" who paid the price of 24,029 casualties for their efforts. The monument itself is simple in form, like the others, a low octagonal granite block with an inscription that recognizes the efforts of Canadian soldiers in holding back the Germans in the battles that took place in the Somme River region, specifically those from September 15 through November 19, 1916. The location chosen for this monument was the site at which Canadians won their first victory in this series of offensives.
The Battle of Vimy Ridge has become generally accepted as a defining moment in Canada’s journey to becoming an independent nation. While many Canadian soldiers lost their lives during the attack, the assault was undoubtedly one of the Canadian Corps’ most successful operations. Just north of Arras, in France, is the Canadian National Vimy Memorial, which is dedicated generally to all the Canadians who served in the war, as well as specifically to the Canadian soldiers whose lives were lost in France but have no known grave. The names of 11,285 soldiers are carved into limestone panels at the base of the monument; seventeen of these names belong to men from the six communities on Vancouver Island whose home front memorials are the primary focus of this study. The monument at Vimy Ridge on the Douai Plain was designed by Canadian sculptor and architect Walter Seymour Allward and unveiled on July 26, 1936. The site of this memorial is significant, not simply for its location where the significant battle took place, but also for the battlefield terrain that has survived nearly a century of “restoration.” The context that the trenches, shell holes and bunkers remaining at the location provide an historical understanding of the Canadian soldier’s role in the war in this area is irreplaceable.

On the outskirts of the village of Passchendaele northeast of Ieper, Belgium, the Passchendaele Canadian Memorial stands to commemorate the efforts of Canadian soldiers in the fall of 1917. Although they faced “some of the fiercest resistance they were to meet during the war,” the soldiers advanced the line and finally captured the remains of Passchendaele village and the nearby ridge. Nine Canadians were awarded the Victoria Cross for their heroic efforts here, in what the inscription on the memorial describes as “a
t treacherous morass." This effort was not without sacrifice, as there were an estimated 16,000 casualties during the offensive that lasted from October 26, 1917 to November 11, 1917.\textsuperscript{116}

A memorial to the achievements of the Canadian Corps in the Battle of Amiens on August 8-11, 1918, \textit{Le Quesnel Canadian Memorial}, consists of another of the granite blocks that is surrounded by maples, conifers, and a holly hedge. The battle was a largely successful military offensive and the commencement of the Last Hundred Days, which ended German resistance in the west, with the Canadian Corps advancing an unprecedented 13 kilometers on the first day alone. The memorial’s inscription, written in both French and English, reads “The Canadian Corps one hundred thousand strong on 8\textsuperscript{th} August 1918 attacked between Hourges and Villers-Bretonneux and drove the enemy eastward for eight miles.”\textsuperscript{117}

For the efforts of the Canadian Corps in the Second Battle of Arras in 1918, a memorial block of granite stands in the middle of a park of “stately” maples and “preserves in stone the memory of hard fought-actions to break the Drocourt-Quéant Line.”\textsuperscript{118} Seven Canadians were awarded Victoria Crosses for their efforts on the assault’s bloodiest day, September 2, 1918, when the Corps’ efforts shattered the Hindenburg Line.\textsuperscript{119}

The nearby \textit{Bourlon Wood Canadian Memorial} is a large stone block that was built atop the hill that Canadian soldiers captured on September 27, 1918; the memorial is surrounded by terraces that have been cut into the side of the hill and accessed by stone steps. A unique feature of this memorial are the lines of ancient lime trees that border the
steps up the hill to the memorial. Although severely damaged by shellfire in battle, the original trees survived, and remain silent witnesses to the offensives of the First World War, and subsequent generations of mourners who have observed this space in the years since.¹²⁰ There are a number of other memorials across the Western Front on which Canadian soldiers and their valiant efforts have been commemorated; these memorials have a variety of broad dedications to all soldiers of the Empire involved in conflicts in the area surrounding them.

According to the National Inventory of Canadian Military Memorials, there are approximately 6,700 memorials located in Canada, a very large number of which are missing further information about when they were constructed, specifics about where they are located, and details regarding form. Many are listed without even a photograph attached, leaving it impossible to glean any additional information that the lack of description makes necessary. To provide a broader understanding of the memorial landscape throughout British Columbia after the First World War, and impart context to my discussion of select memorials on Vancouver Island, it is beneficial to briefly explore other memorials that were built in the province as well. For the purposes of this examination, only those memorials for which sufficient information is listed on the National Inventory of Canadian Military Memorials have been considered, particularly with reference to their form.¹²¹ In this overview of memorial landscape, much like this analysis, focus will be placed upon those memorials that were built during the period between the First and Second World Wars, in the more conventional symbolic commemorative form of stone cenotaphs, cairns or obelisks, and have engraved upon them the names of local soldiers who sacrificed their lives in the conflict. Service
associations, schools, religious organizations, and various other groups also created smaller war memorials in an effort to pay tribute to the members of their communities who went to war; these were frequently in the form of honour rolls located within their respective spaces. While the honour rolls such as these did list names of soldiers, they have not been included in this study. The reasons for this exclusion are threefold: first, their dedications were specific and restricted to only those soldiers who were members of their organization prior to the beginning of the war. Furthermore, the honour roll lists were often compiled and completed even before the war ended and as such were a means of both boosting and boasting about the community’s contribution to the war effort rather than commemorating sacrifice. And lastly, there was no distinction made between those soldiers who returned from the war and those who were laid to rest in the cemeteries of the Western Front.

All utilitarian memorial forms have also been excluded, such as parks, buildings, and street names as the scale of inclusion for these types of memorials is so immense as to preclude in depth examination. Furthermore, they are excluded as the intention by which they were created was not solely to commemorate the sacrifices of local soldiers, but rather this purpose became secondary by virtue of the decision to create a utilitarian memorial. It was not uncommon for communities that lacked facilities such as a library, community hall, or the like to use the funds raised for a war memorial to build something that could be used by those who returned from war, their families, and the wider community.122

In Canada, construction of the National War Memorial commenced in 1926 and the memorial was revealed to the public in 1939. It was erected in Confederation Square
in the downtown area of the nation’s capital of Ottawa, close to the Parliament Buildings.

The design for this memorial was selected from among 126 submissions; Vernon March’s *The Great Response of Canada* was the winner of the competition because of its accurate representation of all the people who went to war from Canada, and the marked absence of any glorification of war.\(^{123}\) Built for all the people of Canada, it serves as a focal point of the nation’s Remembrance Day observance each year. Smaller war memorials in communities across Canada likewise are used annually as gathering places for Canadians to stand shoulder to shoulder with veterans on Remembrance Day, collectively commemorating the efforts of all soldiers from all conflicts in which Canada has been involved.

In order to adequately compare these with the memorials in this study, the overview of other memorials built throughout British Columbia in the interwar period, and all of the following analysis will only include and make reference to those that were built specifically with a commemorative purpose and where their form clearly reflects such purpose. There were thirty-six communities in British Columbia that built war memorials between the First and Second World Wars.\(^{124}\) Of these memorials, exactly half have engraved on them the names of local soldiers who gave their lives at war. While amongst the majority of these memorials there appears to be no correlation between population and the memorials having names engraved on them, it is not surprising that some of the largest of these communities, with their larger tolls of casualties, chose not to include names.

The capital city of British Columbia, Victoria had a population of 38,727 in the 1921 census. Its memorial was built in 1919 and was dedicated specifically to the war
dead of the First World War and consisted of a granite slab on a concrete base.\textsuperscript{125} It is important to note that while the Victoria memorial was dedicated to those who died, it was not specifically built to honour only those local soldiers who sacrificed their lives, but rather the entirety of Canada’s war dead. Because the memorial was not dedicated to local soldiers specifically, there are no names engraved on its surfaces. Likely the decision for the broad dedication in this case was a more political decision that was related to the city’s role as a provincial capital and the desire for a memorial that presented an inclusive commemoration for all the soldiers who died.

The city of Vancouver had a population of 117,217 in the 1921 census. Its memorial, a granite obelisk completed in 1924, was broadly dedicated: “In memory of those who gave their lives in the service of our country.”\textsuperscript{126} Like the Victoria memorial, it did not have the names of soldiers engraved on it. Again, the question of inclusion would prove simply too problematic for a population that large. Surely many British Columbians had lived in or had family in Vancouver at some point and the practice of seeking the public submission of names to be included would undoubtedly result in some soldiers being missed entirely, while other names might have appeared on more than one memorial.

Just outside Victoria the small city of Esquimalt, with a population of 3,458, was the home of a naval base. Their local memorial was built out of stone pillars and was unveiled to the public in 1924.\textsuperscript{127} The community of Prince Rupert, home to 6,393 souls, built a stone shaft memorial in 1929.\textsuperscript{128} Once again, names were noticeably absent from the memorial design in each of these cities. While some of the communities listed above were among the larger of cities located in British Columbia, population size does not
universally explain the difference of choice regarding whether to include names on the memorial or not, for there were certainly memorials with names of soldiers engraved on them built in communities with larger populations than some of those communities whose memorial choice involved a broader inscription dedicated to all those who sacrificed their lives at war.

The other cities within the province which did have names engraved on their war memorials were varied in population size and location. Kamloops built their obelisk memorial in 1925, Richmond a granite cross in 1921-22, Abbotsford also chose a granite cross memorial that was unveiled in 1929 and Grand Forks built an obelisk in 1921. Merritt’s memorial was a concrete shaft unveiled the same year. Revelstoke and Kelowna each decided on stone shafts, dedicated respectively in 1923 and 1921. Creston and Vernon both have stone war memorials built some time during the interwar period. Their inscriptions make it clear that they were specifically dedicated to local soldiers who died during the First World War; however, the National Inventory of Canadian Military Memorials lists no information about their actual date of construction. Penticton built a granite obelisk memorial for their soldiers in 1920, Lavington built a cairn in 1919 and finally Surrey’s war memorial was a statue with a stone slab erected in 1921. Cities that chose to build war memorials that did not have the names of local soldiers engraved upon them, other than those already discussed include: Fernie (1922), Mackenzie (1922), Nelson (1922), Phoenix (1920), Nakusp (1921), New Denver (1938), Prince Rupert (1929), Cobble Hill (1920), Delta (1921), Enderby (1937), Kettle Valley (1924), Malakwa (1924), North Vancouver (1923), and Powell River (1929).
There are twenty-one other memorials located in British Columbia that do have names of soldiers engraved on them; however, their respective dates of construction are not listed with the National Inventory of Canadian Military Memorials.\textsuperscript{129} The lack of information regarding these memorials not only makes it difficult to obtain sufficient information for comparative analysis, but also to place them within the interwar period with any degree of certainty, and as a result they have not been included in the core of this study. There were also memorials constructed after the Second World War which have names of soldiers engraved, but they have logically been excluded from this examination as their construction is not representative of the same sentiment of collective commemoration of the war dead of the First World War, but rather were built to honour the sacrifices of those soldiers who died in the Second World War with the names of those local soldiers from the earlier conflict engraved as a respectful addition.

In some of the communities where the war memorial erected have an absence of names, this could possibly be attributed to a greater population when compared to other communities throughout Vancouver Island at this time, like in the capital city of Victoria. However it is more likely that the matter of whom to include and exclude left it appropriate to choose a broad inscription that was dedicated to all war dead. Numerous factors would have made the compilation of an exhaustive list of names of soldiers who died from each of these cities problematic.

Then again, it is possible that the absence of names on war memorials in larger cities could be attributed to a different experience of grief after the immense losses of the First World War? While it is certain that the entire city of Esquimalt or Victoria mourned for the supreme sacrifice of their local men, the greater number of men from the area who
went to war (and later gave their lives), and the larger population in general, would make the gathering of names an arduous task. Surely there would have been much disagreement surrounding the question of inclusion on the memorial, and the risk that many names could be missed, particularly if families lived elsewhere. It seems that the complexity of the task of compiling the names for a memorial was magnified such that large cities such as Vancouver and Victoria chose not to gather names for their city memorials to the war.

After the Second World War, and well into the late twentieth century, even more memorials were built on Vancouver Island. These, erected long after the memorials of the First World War, were broad in their inscription and did not bear the names of individual soldiers, and included the communities of Courtenay (1996), Lake Cowichan (1960), Port Alberni (1942), and Port McNeil (1985). Built as a commemorative piece, they were often more in the style of a monument and featured a respectful inscription dedicated to the soldiers of all the wars in which Canadian soldiers had been involved, not just those who sacrificed their lives. Memorials such as these have been excluded from this study because they were not built in the immediate years following the First World War, and as such are not a reflection of the community-wide experience of grief and mourning rooted in that conflict, but rather a reinforcement of the importance of honouring those who have served Canada in war.

The effort to include dedications to all those who served, not just those who died, in the First World War, on the commemorative inscriptions on war monuments built in the period after the Second World War speaks to the shift in meaning of the process of memorialization that occurs as the date of memorial construction recedes from the war’s
end. If a greater amount of time has passed, the memorial can no longer be attributed to the collective expression of grief of community members through their commemoration of the soldiers, but rather as a way in which to honour the service of all of Canada's soldiers. There are also numerous plaques dedicated to soldiers that were members of churches, service organizations, colleges or professional groups; these have been excluded from this study as they honour only a specific cohort of soldiers, and because the names listed on plaques are often found elsewhere on stone memorials.

While certainly there were other types of memorials erected on Vancouver Island after the First World War, no others have engraved on them the names of soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice. Not only do the memorials chosen for this study meet the criteria outlined above, but they also allow for sufficient analysis to be drawn. Because the names are listed, it is possible to access their attestation (enlistment) papers and casualty details. The names also allow for a further depth of analysis through the examination of local newspapers, for any mention of the soldiers in these publications would have been otherwise overlooked had the soldiers not been identified by name. The memorials erected in Chemainus, Courtenay, Duncan, Ladysmith, Nanaimo and Parksville provide the opportunity for a closer look at the process of memorialization in Canada after the war. More specifically, it was important that the selected memorials had been built in the immediate years following the First World War, ensuring they were constructed while at the forefront of community members’ minds, and therefore a reflection of that community-wide expression of grief, rather than years later as a respectful afterthought or as an addendum to Second World War commemorative efforts. In the following chapter I will examine the process of memorialization in each of the six
communities with respect to the work leading up to the erection of the memorials, their actual construction and the dedication ceremonies that revealed them to their communities. The individual names listed on memorials were of key importance in the connection that was established between soldiers lost in the First World War and the citizens of their home communities while the memorials were built during the interwar period.
Chapter 3: Process of Memorialization

War memorials built in Canada following the First World War were often erected in significant civic areas, near the downtown in public parks or close to courthouses, city halls or churches. This meant that the memorials were therefore located at the center of public life, allowing for observation, reflection and remembrance to be intertwined with the citizen's daily activities. Whether this consideration occurred with purpose at official ceremonies or during private contemplation, or more unconsciously in passing, was irrelevant to the reality that the war memorial was a central feature of the community’s postwar landscape. My work places emphasis on the process of memorialization, and the meaning expressed through each choice, as can be seen through the progression from local experiences of war, to the inception of each memorial, and finally, to the way in which plans for the design and placement of these memorials were finalized, arguing that community was a central factor in the erection of a war memorial in post First World War Canada. Furthermore, it is specifically the community’s decision to include the names of fallen soldiers on their local memorial that points to the very importance of community. The names carved in stone served as the last connective tissue between the soldiers, their bodies buried in the fields of Europe, and the home front communities that they had left to defend.

This study has focused on six war memorials that were built after the First World War on Vancouver Island. In the process of planning the construction of a war memorial in these towns as well as others, community members took care when considering such elements as design, content and location, and ensuring that the chosen memorial accurately reflected their collective feeling regarding the sacrifice of their local
men. As discussed earlier, the question of inclusion was also integral to the planning process. Community members were less concerned about the political, moral or artistic value of each memorial, but rather that they fulfilled the practical need for commemoration and conveyed this feeling without the complication of the intersecting influences of politics, morality or the perceived artistic value of said memorial. Jonathan Vance explained this approach, stating that “communities employed artists and architects not to create art, but to produce memory aids.” These memory aids were used to reconcile the immense distance between the final resting place of the soldiers who died in the First World War, and their homes that seemed (and to all intents were) a world away. The memorials were used as symbolic meeting places for the “distant grief” felt by those who remained on the home front, and further, that the memorials assumed a significantly greater importance as a result of said distance.

The following will be an overview of the process of memorialization, including the community dialogue prior to construction, the actual memorial design and building, and the dedication. An examination of the newspapers from the communities wherein these six memorials were built, as well as from the city of Victoria, the Island’s metropolitan center, provides insight into the process by which these memorials were decided upon, in terms of both form and location, and the names gathered. Furthermore, the newspapers sometimes highlight information regarding the specifics of who was involved in their planning and construction, what the unveiling ceremony looked like, and even details about many of the men whose names are engraved upon them, sometimes even including letters written by the soldiers, poems by family members or most often, notices of their deaths in the war.
The forms of each of the memorials were designed and decided upon by members of the communities where they were built, and commemorative conventions established in previous wars as well as cultural factors (especially religion and nationality) were often considered and represented in the memorial choices of these communities, much like they were in other communities throughout Canada. While the memorials built after the First World War did typify some aspects of prior conventions, they did not exactly duplicate them in their entirety, and as a result of the sheer scale of the commemorative movement after this war, the memorials built during this period actually set the standard for memorialization of war dead through the rest of the twentieth century. As mentioned earlier, the commemorative movement throughout the Empire was driven by community members through service organizations, fundraising efforts, and often a great amount of volunteer labour; the unofficial character of the process of memorialization allows for the consideration of First World War memorials to be artifacts representative of the community’s expression of grief at the loss of their local men, and the disconnect felt as a result of the decision by the Imperial War Graves Commission not to repatriate the bodies of soldiers.

Dan Todman’s exploration of British commemoration and remembrance practices in his book *The Great War: Myth and Memory* offers valuable insights into the making of cultural representations of myth and memory of the war in British society, insights which have application in Anglo-Canadian society. He directs attention to the interwar years as the time during which there transpired the “establishment of lasting conventions about the ways in which the war should be remembered and represented.” In a chapter about death and the First World War, he explains that the commemorative
efforts in Britain originated “from below: it was based on the interaction of the expressed
and perceived desires of the population at large, rather than officially imposed.”134 This is
something that I mean to explore further, within the context of Canadian commemoration
at the community level. The Cenotaph at Whitehall was Todman’s central point of
analysis for this phenomenon, the author pointing out the overwhelmingly positive way
in which the public received the Cenotaph and the obligation the government felt, as a
result of the vast crowds and wreaths it attracted, to make the temporary monument
permanent.135 Thus, even the official commemorative efforts after the First World War
became permanent, not through the efforts of the government, but rather of citizens who
felt the need for lasting remembrance for their fallen soldiers.

Table 3.1 Birthplace

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<th>VAN. ISL.</th>
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<th>UK</th>
<th>AFR.</th>
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<th>AUS/NZ</th>
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This table shows the birthplace of the soldiers whose names were engraved on the
memorials as compared to the birthplace of males aged 11-50 years as of the 1911
census.

Canadian commemorative efforts and conventions during the interwar period
were strikingly similar to the British, particularly as a result of Canada’s close ties to
Britain, and the overwhelming population of British-born Canadians, especially on
Vancouver Island, and as such comparisons can easily be drawn between the processes of
memorialization in each country. Historians have suggested that the people of British
Columbia were at the ready to enlist in the war alongside Great Britain because of their
strong ties to the ‘Mother Country’, both colonial, as well as familial. Out of a total population of 29,071, there were 9,969 (34%) people in the area included in the Vancouver Island census districts who had been born in England, Wales, Scotland or Ireland as of the time of the 1911 census; this meant that nearly thirty-five percent of the population had emigrated from Great Britain. The 1911 census did not record the birthplace of an individual’s parents; however, if we refer to the last census to record this data (1891), less than a generation prior, it shows that 15,484 (43%) of the 36,231 residents of Vancouver Island census districts had parents who were both born in England and Wales, Scotland or Ireland. That number increases to 16,395 (45%) when just the birthplace of the mother is considered, and even further to 17,991 (50%) when only the birthplace of father is reviewed.

It is the function of community in the mourning process after the First World War that most directs my research, and simultaneously, how the names of soldiers were used as identifiers of those said communities. In outlining his fourfold definition of nation as *imagined, limited, sovereign,* and a *community*, Benedict Anderson’s explanation of community as “a deep, horizontal comradeship” is the most valuable. In consideration of the commemorative activities of community members in these communities on Vancouver Island, it is evident that Anderson’s “community,” if taken to mean those individuals located within the constraints of a physical region, was brought together through the process of memorialization. This horizontal comradeship is a relationship between not only those members of a locality who participated in the dialogue regarding construction and through the process of memorialization, but also those whose names were listed on said memorials. It is the soldiers’ position, as members
of these communities, which creates the deep sense of loss and desire in the community members to construct a suitable memorial to honour the sacrifices of their men’s lives while at war. This also reinforces the idea that the significance of the soldiers’ names on the memorials was not for the sake of their individual efforts and names, but rather as identified members of a community proud to name them as members of their community group, and motivated to erect memorials with those names engraved to reconcile the grief felt over the immense loss of life during and after the war.

Regarding the community-oriented construction of war memorials, Jonathan Vance makes an important case, stating that “attempts at centralized control of memorialization were rightfully deplored, for this would have undermined the whole purpose of raising monuments to the war.”140 This also speaks to the difference between the working definitions of memorials and monuments explained in the introduction. The community sentiment behind the desire to construct a war memorial was one of the integral features relating to the memorial itself. Furthermore this sentiment must continue in the years following its completion in order for the memorial to remain relevant in any given society. It is the process of memorialization as experienced by communities that will be explored further. For these purposes, the meaning of the word community is taken broadly to include those members of a social group as determined by their location within or near the localities where the memorials were built. The few identified community members from these places are made apparent through their participation in the process of memorialization, but are taken as representative of the wider sentiment of community members who were not identified by name in local newspapers or service groups as regards the memorialization activities of their area.
Throughout Vance’s study of the cultural artifacts created during this period through the expression of grief, he makes numerous assertions regarding war memorials specifically. Many of these observations have helped to shape my own views on such memorials; however, in looking at such diverse media, pieces that he explained as being transmitters of the myth of the First World War in Canadian society, Vance was unable to explore details regarding the construction of the memorials. Nor did he take into consideration whose names were carved in each stone, which community members were integral to the building of the memorial, or how they used the memorial construction to reconcile the grief caused by each sacrifice and the community focused process of memorialization that occurred as a result of this collective loss within each locality. In fact, Vance paid no attention to the names, nor recognized them as having any significance either individually, or with respect to the community connections that they represented. It is here that I built on Vance’s work and focused specifically on the names of soldiers, using them to draw out further information about the community-wide experience of grief and the wider process of memorialization in Canada after the First World War.

Furthermore, drawing comparison to other Canadian historians’ work related to the home front experience allows for the study of these six war memorials on Vancouver Island to be placed in the wider context of First World War commemoration studies. As much as importance has been placed upon the sentiment of community members contemporary to the memorials’ construction, language plays an even more fundamental role in understanding the process of memorialization during the interwar period. In *Death so Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War*, Vance underscores the
importance of language choice when discussing the death of soldiers during the First World War. He clarifies that, “war memorials almost never refer to the dead as having lost their lives,” but rather that, “the fallen invariably gave their lives. There is a sense of purpose inherent in this notion that affirmed the war as a meaningful event and its participants as willing actors. To lose one’s life was a tragedy; to give one’s life by making the supreme sacrifice was the ultimate in selflessness.”¹⁴¹ This language was repeated consistently in the newspaper articles from papers on Vancouver Island written during and after the conflict as well as through personal correspondence, poetry and other writing published in each paper.

While this community-oriented memorialization movement, with the use of names as integral to the memorial form, took place at the local level in average sized communities and this study focuses on only a handful of such, this practice was repeated in approximately half of the memorials built across Canada during the interwar period. Anderson’s definition of a nation’s horizontal comradeship can be seen through the community-driven memorialization process. A particularly poignant example of this horizontal comradeship can be seen in the cairn memorial built in Courtenay, which was erected with stones set in place by individual community members in honour of those local soldiers who sacrificed their lives. Each stone was meant to represent a soldier whom the cairn was built to honour, and was placed on the cairn by community members who sought to remember those individuals through the very intentional act of service in its construction. The horizontal comradeship extends beyond that between soldiers and their peers, to the way in which those who were left on the home front viewed the sacrificed whose names were to be engraved. Of all the names on the memorials,
approximately seven percent were of soldiers who were into uniform via the Military Services Act, yet there was no distinction made on any of the memorials identifying the difference between them and the enlisted men. To the communities on Vancouver Island erecting these memorials, the manner in which soldiers arrived at war was not relevant, sacrifice was the universal equalizer and the parity of names on each memorial regardless of rank, enlistment, or acts of service demonstrated this horizontal comradeship.

The importance of connection to the physicality of one’s home was another important factor in the symbolism of the war memorials built throughout the interwar period. Even during the war, discussion of commemorative activities elsewhere in the British Empire could be found in newspapers. An example of the newspaper dialogue that shaped the process of memorialization was published in August 1916, when the *Victoria Daily Times* relayed a community decision to have two different species of Canadian maple trees planted in the cemeteries where soldiers from the Dominion of Canada lay or had been laid to rest in France. While the article does not explicitly discuss the reason for the decision to plant Canadian grown trees at the graves of the country’s soldiers, it is clear that part of the intention was to reconcile the distance between the final resting place of the soldiers and the soil of their home country by doing so. If the soldiers’ bodies were not to be repatriated, a symbol of home would be brought to them so as to reinforce the connection between the individual, place, and memory.

The names of soldiers who had sacrificed their lives that were engraved on the memorials were significant, not simply as identifiers of who the men were from each community that would not return, but rather as markers for those families within the community who were in mourning for the loss of a father, son, or brother. Jay Winter
suggested that the names "pointed out who needed help in the aftermath of the war."¹⁴³

With the advantage of our contemporary insight into memorials of the First World War, as the centennial anniversary of the opening of the conflict has so recently passed, it is possible to see that the names have even greater significance in ensuring the sacrifices of local soldiers are not forgotten as years elapse and no living memory of the war remains.

Figure 3.1 Chemainus Obelisk
Community members in the village district of Chemainus began to discuss plans for construction of their local war memorial not long after the end of the hostilities. At the City Council meeting on July 19, 1920, a request was made by Mr. Jarret, a community member, to provide land for a war memorial. To begin the process of memorialization, the land was donated by the city of Chemainus at the following council meeting, nine days later. The location chosen for the memorial was a 616 square foot parcel of land on Mill Road near the Anglican Church and the Courthouse. Further requests were made to City Council, one by Mr. Alfred Stubbs on June 15, 1921 requesting two German machine guns to place near the cenotaph; a second, by Reverend R.D. Porter on June 21 also requested some war trophies for the community. Although requests such as these were typical of traditional war memorials, neither of these pleas were satisfied. This suggests that the City Council, as representing the community, felt that the war trophies were not in keeping with the intention to honour the sacrifices of Chemainus’ soldiers.

Their war memorial was officially unveiled on November 20, 1921 at two o’clock in the afternoon. A full Order of Service was printed and presented by the Cowichan Leader. The memorial was dedicated to “the memory of those courageous hearts who, for us, gave their all in freedom’s cause,” and included a quote meant to represent the feeling of sacrifice in the soldiers whose names were listed on the memorial: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” This ceremony was typical of other unveiling ceremonies for community war memorials after the First World War, and the format has been replicated ever since in the Remembrance ceremonies for which people gather yearly on November 11.
The ceremony started with the national anthem, followed by a prayer by Reverend E. M. Cook that led into the two minutes of silence for reflection. While the war memorial was unveiled and dedicated, there was a reading of names by Brigadier General L. F. Green-Wilkinson. The hymn *The Supreme Sacrifice* was sung while Mrs. W. J. Watson played the music, and words for this were printed on the Order of Service so all community members could, and were encouraged to, participate. Reverend R. D. Porter then read a scripture that was not included in full text on the Order of Service, but presumably consisted of a prayer for the sacrificed lives of soldiers whose names were on the memorial. The ceremony went on with a playing of the *Last Post* and a reading of *The Lord’s Prayer* before finally the commitment of the memorial by Mr. A. E. P. Stubbs, a
prominent community member; the acceptance of memorial by Mrs. R. B. Halhed, regent of Sister Agnes Keyser Chapter, I. O. D. E.; a singing of the hymn *Abide With Me*; and lastly a blessing by Rev. S. Ryall. The ceremony was closed off with the playing of *Reveille* and the wreath laying.

![Figure 3.3 Courtenay Cairn](image)
The memorial cairn built in Courtenay, BC was the result of far reaching community effort and contribution. After the Armistice, there were numerous articles printed in the local newspaper, the Comox Argus, which demonstrated the process by which the people of this area shaped their own understanding of commemoration and memorialization, an understanding that was deeply entrenched in the ideals and attributes of the community. The citizens of the district were aware of the memorial plans of other communities across Canada, and combined ideas from other centers with symbolic elements that were uniquely reflective of their own community, to create a memorial that they felt appropriately honoured their local men who had died in the war.

The first public suggestion of the need for a memorial was found in the Comox Argus, speaking of the desire for a “monument to be erected to the memory of the fallen heroes from this District,” and was printed less than a month after the armistice had been agreed to. There was a bank account opened immediately to hold any money raised for the purpose of a war memorial in Courtenay and an editorial notified the community of said bank account while suggesting that “what form that memorial should take is a matter of divided counsels: it is for the public to decide in public meeting.” Again, the intention is clear; above all there is to be a memorial created in full by the community, for the purposes of honouring those fallen soldiers of the community. In a brazen letter to the editor, G. Robert Bates, the president of the local chapter of the Great War Veterans’ Association, acknowledged the “many” suggestions about the form of the proposed memorial, but followed with the stern observation that “the prevailing opinion [presumably amongst the members of the GWVA] seems to be, however, and I think rightly so, that it should take the form of a building which would be used a Club room for
those who have returned.” Examination of the continuous dialogue in the local newspaper revealed that initially there was actually a split in the direction of memorialization in Courtenay. Simultaneously, plans were made for two very distinct forms of commemoration for the soldiers who did not return from the war. One became a very utilitarian memorial, in the form of community hall to be used by various organizations which and community members who contributed to the war effort. The other was a stone memorial specifically honouring those men who died, and to be built through a collective effort of all members of the community.

It is only the stone memorial that is of relevance to this study. The form eventually decided upon was a cairn, to be built with stones gathered from every corner of the Comox Valley, each placed by the hands of members of the community who brought them from their own property. This design was collectively decided upon at a Board of Trade meeting for the Courtenay-Comox district. The location chosen by the people of the area for their memorial was at the “oldest settled portion of the valley, the very core and centre of the district,” and it has remained at this location, having never been relocated. A community member named Barbara Dingwall donated the land for the memorial from her family’s property, her mother, Olivia Duncan, having been one of the earliest pioneers of the area. The construction of the memorial cairn was planned to occur in conjunction with the observance of Poppy Day on November 7, 1921; the war memorial committee asked the Mayor of Courtenay to declare a community holiday so that everyone interested in helping to raise the cairn could attend. The names of community members involved in the committee were not published in the local paper. However, surely there was much crossover in membership between the War Memorial
Committee and the Great War Veterans’ Association, as the memorial’s construction plans were debated at the meetings of the association. It was decided through these meetings to lay a foundation for the memorial prior to the construction gathering planned for Poppy Day so that the site would be ready for the erection of the cairn in order that the greatest number of community members could participate. What was described as a “vast concourse” of people gathered to assist with the assembly of the war memorial cairn on Poppy Day, 1921. Volunteers had worked non-stop through the week leading up to the ceremony preparing the foundation under the cairn.\textsuperscript{155} The Poppy Day ceremony at which the people of Courtenay built their memorial will be discussed further in the following, along with a more detailed description of the memorial’s form.

The memorial cairn at Courtenay was officially unveiled during an “affecting ceremony” on Sunday November 12, 1922 to a large crowd of community members. Although the cairn portion of the memorial had been constructed at the previous Poppy Day (in 1921), there were finishing touches that were added in the year between the two dates, specifically the plaque with the soldiers’ names. All the returned soldiers of the Comox Valley gathered at the Great War Veterans Association Hall the morning of the 1922 unveiling. The men marched with Colonel Warden, who had raised and then commanded Comox’s 102nd Battalion, at the head down Union Street and across the Courtenay Bridge to the location of the memorial where the cairn was covered by the Union Jack flag; a large crowd was waiting for their arrival, and the soldiers arranged themselves in line in front of the monument for the ceremony. Captain G. R. Bates, then president of the local chapter of the Great War Veteran’s Association, opened the service
and he introduced Colonel Warden, who was favourably received in his role leading the unveiling ceremony.

Colonel Warden asked the crowd to “try and grasp the true significance of that most original monument to all those who fell for their country. From that day and from the very moment the memorial was unveiled he wanted them to remember—and not only themselves—but to teach their children—those boys who gave their lives for their country.” Three verses of Kipling’s *Recessional* were sung, an opening prayer was recited by Rev. W. T. Beattie, and then the Mayor of Courtenay, Mr. Charles Simms, addressed the crowd and spoke about how the foundation for this memorial cairn had been laid almost a year prior. It was an invitation to reflect on the collaborative work of the entire community in raising such a fitting monument. The *Comox Argus* wrote of the ceremony that:

Col. Warden, who was so strongly affected by the emotion he felt at the memory which the scene and the moment evoked, that he had to stop for some minutes to control his voice, said that it was indeed a unique monument which he was asked to unveil, being gathered from every nook and corner of the district and contributed to by them all. Those men who were with them but a few short years ago had gone. The great duty they had performed was one which it was difficult to realize and appreciate—the awful violence of the struggle, leading unto their death which they went through. He asked them as time went on to remember those men, and to remember those who had come back amongst them—their staunchest friends. War was a terrible thing, but it was over; the only duty left to them who were spared was to see that the laws of the land were upheld and they were true to the ideals for which those men died. He felt it was a great honour for him to be there to perform the ceremony. He had a very warm spot in his heart for Comox and Courtenay.

It was after this address that he then unveiled the memorial cairn that had engraved on its tablet the names of forty-one soldiers who would never return.

The design for the war memorial in Duncan was chosen by referendum of the citizens of this new municipality. Construction costs were financed by public subscription.
and the memorial was unveiled at what is contemporarily named Major Charles Hoey Victory Memorial Park on Armistice Day in 1921. A photograph of the war memorial in Duncan, BC in 1921 represents the first location of the memorial; however, it was relocated in 1947 in a move that will be discussed in greater detail in the following section. The process of memorialization in this community was particularly important because they had so recently been incorporated as a city. The way in which the community came together to decide on the design for the memorial by calling a referendum would set the stage for future democratic decision-making processes to be utilized in the city’s future.

Duncan's war memorial was revealed to the public on November 11, 1921, appropriately at 11a.m. to a crowd of hundreds of community members who had gathered to honour the memory of their local men who had fallen in the war. The ceremony was opened with "O, Canada" and words to the crowd by Captain J. W. Groves. Two minutes of silence was then observed by the whole assembly before the cross was unveiled and then officially dedicated to the fallen by Mrs. J. Maitland-Dougall, presumably on behalf of all mothers who lost their sons; she had lost two in the recent war. Rev. F. L. Stephenson, Rev. E. M. Cook and Rev. J. R. Butler gave prayers in honour of those soldiers, followed by passages from the bible read by Rev. A. T. Munro. The ceremony involved an acceptance of the duty of care for the cross memorial by Mayor S. Pitt on behalf of the City of Duncan. The Reveille was then sounded and wreaths were placed by many of the community members, societies and organizations that were in attendance that day. The local Boy Scouts and Girl Guides stood in an honour guard during the ceremony.
Figure 3.4 Duncan Memorial Cross

This figure shows the Duncan memorial cross in its original location in 1921 at left, and at right in the site chosen for relocation with the additional layer at bottom for the Second World War and Korean War.

The construction of the monument to soldiers in Ladysmith was made possible largely as a result of the efforts of the Ladysmith and District Ex-Servicemen’s Association.\(^\text{162}\) It was dedicated to “the memory of those noble fellow citizens who died for home and country.”\(^\text{163}\) At the dedication ceremony, Mr. T. A. Spruston, a local business owner, spoke words that poignantly represent the feeling present throughout the process of memorialization in Ladysmith:
There is no doubt but what this occasion will revive the memories and open up the bereavement that has been smoldering in the hearts of the relatives and the comrades who knew these fathers, husbands, sons, and brothers before going overseas, or on the battlefield, but, let us hope that the kindly spirit and feeling which prompted the returned soldiers and their fellow citizens to erect this memorial will more than compensate that grief, especially when they know that it will ever be a reminder of the esteem and goodwill in which they were held by their fellow men & for all generations to come, for the great sacrifices and the great and glorious deeds they accomplished in giving their lives that we may continue to live as British subjects.

Figure 3.5 Ladysmith Cenotaph

Your committee is to be complimented on their foresight in the choice of such a beautiful memorial to commemorate their fallen comrades. Time and age will
not destroy this rigged stone with its magnificent pillars and canopy of granite, built to stand the storms and weather conditions to which our coast is sometimes subjected. And I hope further that not only will this memorial ever remind us of the great deeds accomplished by these fallen heroes, but may it ever be a living monument to still further cement the good feeling and harmony that has existed between our company and my fellow employees during the last few years, and bind together not only the returned men but all citizens irrespective of, creed and denomination, so that we see to it that those who are left bereaved may never be forgotten until we all meet again.¹⁶⁴

He specifically spoke to the role of the war memorial in compensating for the community’s grief, as well as the way in which it was meant to “bind together” all the citizens with the fallen heroes of their region.

The community of Ladysmith unveiled their war memorial on Sunday January 28, 1923. An article in the Daily Colonist described the ceremony in great detail and included the program and the list of fallen soldiers whose names were honoured on the monument. The ceremony started with a band playing the national anthem and then a prayer by Rev. J. G. Reid. The large assembly of community members stood together in a moment of silence before the monument was unveiled to the public by Gen. Clark; it was said that the community greatly admired the memorial. The hymn I Heard The Voice Of Jesus Say was sung and then scripture was read by Rev. J. F. Shaw, The Last Post was sounded and a piper named W. Foresythe played The Flowers Of The Forest. The Lord’s Prayer was said by Rev. F. L. Stephenson, followed by a speech by a community leader named Mr. Thomas Spruston that praised the patriotic work by the citizens of Ladysmith in erecting the monument. Rev. F. L. Stephenson came back up to commit the memorial to the care of the Mayor, Council and the citizens of Ladysmith, and their successors. The current mayor, His Worship Mayor Walkem, accepted this honour on behalf of the city with a pledge to protect the stone from all future injury, a promise that appeals to the hilarity of hindsight when the initial location of the memorial, in the very center of the
street, is observed. The main address was delivered by Rev. Father Cooney and it paid tribute to the “patriotic spirit manifested by the young men of Ladysmith during the late war and expressed sympathy with those who had been bereaved.”

The ceremony rounded out with a singing of the hymn *Abide With Me*, a blessing by Rev. J. G. Reid, and the sounding of *Reveille* by Bugler Wettin. Wreaths were laid at the foot of the memorial by representatives from across the community including the City Council, the local Masons, Forresters, Odd Fellows, Hospital Auxilliary, I. O. D. E., General Clark, Mayor and Mrs. Walkem, as well as friends and relatives of the dead heroes.

The designer of the Dallas Square Cenotaph in Nanaimo, BC was a First World War veteran named Millins who envisioned a humble monument with a plan that evolved from a combination of his experience working in the Nanaimo Marble Works, and was inspired by design elements from the Egyptian temples. Jan Peterson, in her book *A Place in Time*, claimed that Nanaimo community members gained interest in erecting a memorial that would commemorate their lost soldiers only after Millins had put forth his imagined design for consideration. This suggests that he was at the forefront of the movement to erect a memorial in the community, yet people had been discussing ideas for the best way to commemorate their local soldiers as early as 1915.

The chosen site for the memorial in Dallas Square was initially suggested in an editorial in the *Nanaimo Free Press* in the fall of 1915; other proposed sites discussed included spaces near the post office or the fire hall. This is evidence that the community had been dedicated to ensuring the soldiers of the First World War would be honoured for nearly five years before Millins had offered his proposal in 1920. When the site was first put forward in the *Nanaimo Free Press* for the memorial to be built in
Dallas Square, they had not yet solidified the plans for design or form. The article suggested that the roll of honour of men whose lives were sacrificed be engraved on a tablet that would be placed somewhere in the city, further suggesting that the tablet be hung on a stone pillar, and that the expense of such a stone memorial would be little or nothing in comparison to its worth. The editor then commented on a similar list being compiled in Port Alberni that was to be framed and hung on the walls inside of their city hall.
Further dialogue regarding the proposed monument continued throughout the war years in editorials of the *Nanaimo Free Press*. These articles were primarily written in response to the discussions of city council, where suggestions of methods of commemoration for the soldiers were frequently put forth. Sentiment regarding who should be included in the city memorial for the Great War was varied. Some felt that all soldiers who had enlisted for active service deserved to be equally honoured, while another suggestion was that the greatest honour that could be given to the veterans would be to return them as effortlessly as possible into civilian life upon their return from the front.170

The City Council of Nanaimo prompted the City Engineer, Mr. W. A. Owen, to design and create an honour roll that would display the names of all soldiers whom the city had “sent forth” into war,171 a list which was duly completed and hung in the Council Chamber in February of 1917. The purpose of the drawing up of such a list prior to the conclusion of the war is unclear. The stated intention of the Roll of Honour was to “lastingly commemorate” all soldiers from Nanaimo; however, a number of Nanaimo’s men had yet to even become soldiers at this time.172 The effort to compile this roll, however, would have been to appease those community members who felt that all soldiers from the area should be commemorated, while allowing the war memorial cenotaph to be dedicated to only those soldiers who had lost their lives. Surely the compilers intended to add new names to said list as became necessary; this is often found on memorials where most names on a list follow an alphabetical order for example, and then it is immediately apparent which names have been added after the initial compilation. It is quite possible, too, that the City Council had intended to do a final
rendition of the Roll of Honour after the war was over, but it was never completed, thus leaving behind the roll with the obvious two sections of the list. The war memorial cenotaph in Nanaimo was unveiled to the public on November 8, 1921 in a ceremony that was attended by most people in the city. Miss Agnes McCorkindale, daughter of Sergt. P. McCorkindale of the British Army, and Miss Lorna McCourt, daughter of Private McCourt of the CEF, had the honour of unveiling the memorial. Each of the girls’ fathers was among the 126 names engraved in stone and who were the focus of this tribute.

The ceremony opened with a march of returned soldiers from the fire hall to Dallas Square where the cenotaph was located. A description of the order of ceremony found in the local newspaper not only reveals the individuals in the community who were particularly affected by the loss of a soldier’s life, those who played a greater role in the process of memorialization, and/or those in the community who were regarded as leaders and asked to say words at the ceremony, but also reflected the sentiment of the community and their commemorative efforts. At the unveiling ceremony, first Canada’s national anthem was played by the band, and then the hymn “Jesus, Lover of My Soul.” A prayer and a reading of a passage from the scriptures were next, read by Rev. S. Ryall and Rev. W. P. Ewing, respectively. The final reading before the memorial was unveiled to the crowd was “Nearer, My God, to Thee,” and then Rev. Mr. Lister gave a short but appropriate speech to everyone in attendance. The ceremonies were closed by the singing of “Abide With Me.”

A large Armistice Day service was held for the people of the district on November 7, 1921 that included the communities of Parksville and Qualicum. The war memorial was unveiled at 11am with a dedication to those from the area who had fallen
in the Great War. The Armistice Day service was held at the memorial unveiling and included a parade of returned soldiers just before the memorial was revealed.

Figure 3.7 Parksville Memorial Cross
The memorial was a large cross with a tablet of names of men who had paid the supreme sacrifice. Many community members attended the ceremony and school children from all surrounding districts laid wreaths at the monument. The ceremony began with a “short and inspiring address” by Brig.-General Money, and then the son of the late Major Richards, M. C., Alan Richards, actually unveiled the monument to the public. Following the unveiling, Rev. Popham and Rev. Dobbin addressed the crowd, then Lieut.-Col. W. B. Grieg, called a final roll of all the names which were engraved on the Parksville memorial. A sounding of the Last Post closed the ceremony and led into the wreath-laying ritual and finally a singing of “O, Canada,” and “God Save the King.” A troop of local Boy Scouts also attended the service. Donations at this Armistice Day service amounted to enough that the construction of the memorial was fully paid for, and the community passed the responsibility of care for the granite cross over to the Parksville Women's Institute.

The unveilings of these memorials were well-attended community events; echoes of the traditions established during the interwar period (and some earlier) remain visible in contemporary society, not just in these cities on Vancouver Island, but across Canada and the Western world. The ceremonies and rituals performed throughout the process of memorialization for each of these six memorials were full of meaning. They were significant certainly for the soldiers whose bodies remained buried in Europe after the war, for the families who sought to reconcile the grief they felt for their loved ones who never returned, and for the community members (including those families) whose collective action resulted in poignant memory markers connecting these localities with the Western Front in a way that would touch a generation of Canadians from those
contemporary to the First World War, to those far removed from any living memory of it. The memorials remain today stoic reminders of the sacrifices of the soldiers who went to war from these communities and never returned; they stand in prominent locations within the community landscape, and even those that were relocated were positioned in such a way as to reinforce the contribution and connection of the community to the war that ravaged a generation.
Conclusion

It is important to discuss how relocation of a war memorial may or may not affect the intended meaning of the memorial as was decided at the time of its construction. Of the six war memorials discussed above, four have been relocated and rededicated at least once, some as many as three times, as a result of city expansion and population growth. What does this relocation suggest about the importance of the memorial, and the posterity of the original message expressed by community members in the years after the First World War?

The decision to move a war memorial from its original location to any other location within the same community, as a result of changes in the orientation of social geography in said community, does not devalue the intended meaning of the memorial, but rather reinforces that those values are still important to society each time the memorial is moved. Some might argue that the movement of the memorial demonstrates a sense of disregard for the sacrifice given by the men whose names are engraved on it, and that relocation for the sake of city expansion signals a greater significance placed on modern conveniences such as transportation. This fails to recognize, however, the changing nature of any given town. Consider that at the time of construction of a town’s war memorial, the committee involved in would have chosen what they deemed to be the most significant site for the memorial, often in the downtown area, near the courthouse, main street, or town square. Now consider that over the lifetime of a war memorial, a town undergoes significant changes, altering the orientation of the social space in the downtown area. If the community expresses desire to relocate its war memorial, often a new place of significance is chosen and a re-dedication ceremony is planned. When the
memorials are relocated, it is not with the intention of displacement, but rather an attitude of providing a more beneficial space for observing the memorial. This relocation therefore moves the memorial from its original site that had once been a central place of significance in the community to a new location that is equal in importance and allows the war memorial to grow and change in a way that is symbiotic to the growth of the community. When you consider that it is the memorial in both its physical and symbolic forms that serves as a connection between community members and those soldiers who were lost at war, it is logical and even acceptable, then, that the memorial should be able to change as that relationship between sacrificed soldiers and community also changes through time.

As a result of changes to the surrounding streets, the Chemainus memorial was moved in August of 1950. It was at this time that the names of soldiers from the Second World War were added, and in later years, a plaque that honoured the Korean veterans. To this day, the memorial remains in its second location, on Willow Street, across from the United Church. Relocation of a war memorial does not undermine the commemorative intention of the original community members who erected this memorial, but rather reinforces its significance to the community even as the years passed. The new location that was chosen for the permanent home of the war memorial is situated where residential and commercial buildings meet, and the park wherein the memorial sits serves as the focal point of Remembrance ceremonies each year. The community of Chemainus has become known in the last thirty years for the historically themed murals painted on commercial buildings throughout the downtown area; these murals were used as a revitalization initiative that was spearheaded by then mayor of the
city, Graham Bruce, during the economic recession in British Columbia during the early 1980s. One such mural, entitled the *Thirty-Three Metre Collage*, by Frank Lewis and Nancy Lagana (1982), can be seen from the memorial park where the Chemainus war obelisk is located; the mural features scenes depicting a busy day in the Chemainus harbour at the turn of the twentieth century.\(^{179}\)

The Ladysmith memorial was also moved, on three different occasions that were no doubt a result of changes to the orientation of the social space in the city, as its population grew larger throughout the twentieth century. When the obelisk was first built after the First World War it was located in the very middle of Gatacre Street on First Avenue. It is little wonder that city growth would necessitate the move of such a hazard in the middle of a main street, regardless of the commemorative intention of the memorial at the time of its construction. During one of the later moves, the memorial was redesigned, removing the roof and shortening the columns to support a chain that would surround the memorial and discourage public interference with the space immediately next to the obelisk. Since 1923, the memorial has been situated in three different locations. The first memorial location, as referenced above, was in the middle of the street where Gatacre Street crosses First Avenue. Its second home was on the side of Esplanade Street near the Customs and Post Office building. The memorial was relocated to this spot in 1949; however, it only spent a short time there before the widening of the Trans-Canada Highway necessitated a move once more. The memorial was then moved across the Trans-Canada Highway – called Esplanade through Ladysmith – and it remains in this location to date, surrounded by ample park space. The highway is a main transportation thoroughfare between the South and North Island; this location thus
ensures notice from local residents and road travellers alike. It was during the latest move that the memorial was also redesigned. In the 1990s, during a time when the city council was discussing a further relocation, the citizens took note. They succeeded in having the location and form of the memorial, including the surrounding land, dedicated as hallowed ground and finally putting an end to any uncertainty about its future location.

Regarding the relocations of the memorial throughout the years, Thomas Wagner of the Ladysmith Historical Society wrote in 2008, “it will always stand as a tribute, regardless of where it is. It is our permanent homage to those willing to serve their country, regardless of the final cost.” It seems that the original sentiment of the townspeople of Ladysmith to some extent remained years later, even though the memorial was relocated numerous times since its original construction. The protest against further relocation by the people of Ladysmith in the 1990s is evidence that although the specific commemorative sentiment that was expressed through the construction of the memorial has passed, an emphasis on remembrance and the importance of continuing to commemorate those soldiers who sacrificed their lives in the war persists. The fact that memorials are re-located [or re-designed for that matter] at any time after their construction does not undermine their importance or commemorative function. Shipley explains that memorials are built in a location central to each community; however, as these communities change over time, the central location of these communities also shifts. The memorials are moved, “not out of places of importance but back into them reflecting the original intent.” The efforts of the people
of Ladysmith to ensure their memorial remained in the location across Esplanade from the Post Office was an attempt to make certain that the community would grow in such a way that the memorial would remain in its place of importance without necessitating further relocations.

The original location of Parksville’s war memorial was on Memorial Avenue, which had memorial trees planted along the edges that had been donated by the Women’s Institute as well. Much like Ladysmith’s war memorial, Parksville's was moved several times as a result of growth, congestion and changes to the orientation of the community’s downtown space to allow the memorial to remain in a place of importance within the community. The first move was to a location on Sutherland Drive where a memorial park was created to surround the monument. The re-dedication ceremony for this move took place on June 11, 1967. The memorial was moved again in 1976 to the Parksville Community Park, where it was re-dedicated on October 23, 1976. In November 2001, the memorial was moved and re-dedicated for the last time, to its present location near the Parksville Civic and Technology Centre, which shares space with the local university, library, as well as city and school district offices.

Throughout the years since these six war memorials were created, whether relocated, rededicated or if they remained in their original place of commemoration, the memorials have persisted as pillars in the community landscape of these Vancouver Island towns. The community members, who came together to collectively form these memorials in Chemainus, Courtenay, Duncan, Ladysmith, Nanaimo and Parksville, whether intentionally or not, produced significant memory markers that had a lasting relevance well into the next century. The memorials to honour their local soldiers who
did not return from the war were crafted through an intersection of war memorial conventions that helped families, friends, and acquaintances of those soldiers to reconcile the grief they felt with the recognition that without the repatriation of soldiers that they would have no body to mourn over. The memorials, then, were a physical connection to their war dead who remained in the fields of Flanders and France, and now, a connection to the past and the experience of a war for which no living memory remains. Each of these purposes has been or continues to be further facilitated through the names engraved upon the memorial face in a way that would not be achievable in absence of the names.

The names played an important role, not only at the end of the war as a significant design element of each war memorial, but also throughout the war as communities sent their local ‘boys’ off to the front, shared their letters, poems and stories, and collectively mourned when obituaries and rolls of honour were printed. The intermediary thread that weaved through all of the printed words, experiences, and memories was the name of the soldier; without the names, the connection between all of these elements would fade in time with the passing of living memory of the First World War. The periods of grief that these six communities experienced as a result of three of the bloodiest conflicts in which Canadian soldiers participated, the Battle of the Somme, the Battle of Vimy Ridge, and the last two major attacks of the Last Hundred Days, respectively, became real for the people on the home front as more and more names were printed on their local newspaper front page each day. “Bob’ McCourt Is Killed In Action; George Strath Reported Dead From Wounds; Sandy Swanson Pays The Sacrifice; Corpl. Archie Bushfield Killed In Action; Private H. L. Cochran Dies Of Wounds;” and “All Canada’s Troops At The Front Moved To British Line North Of Somme To Aid In
Driving Germans; Canadians Are Bearing Share In Big Offensive On Somme Line; Week-End Casualty Lists Longer; “and eventually: “Trees In Honor Of Heroes Of Empire; Will Erect Shrine To Soldiers’ Memory; Memorial To The Fallen;” and “Affecting Ceremony At War Memorial Cairn.” This selection of only a handful of the newspaper articles that community members read throughout the war provides only a fleeting glimpse of the experience of grief that was collectively felt as they absorbed the impact of the carnage on the Western Front.

The poignancy of the war memorials in each of these six communities that were shaped out of an intricate combination of community dialogue, collective understanding of the memorial landscape in the interwar period, and a very intimate yet shared response to the loss of their soldiers' lives was further amplified through the names they chose to engrave in each stone. The list of soldiers on each memorial echoes into the future the grief of a generation as illustrated through these permanent honour rolls. The war memorials stood and continue to stand as intermediaries between intersecting time and place, symbolically connecting the family, friends, and community members on the home front with the distant physical space wherein their fallen men would rest eternally on the Western Front, inadvertently connecting contemporary observers to individuals past and present. The names facilitate a greater resonance in the viewer that exists and thrives through our collective need to relate people, places and objects as a way of knowing. Familial descendants of the soldiers whose names are engraved on the face of those six memorials remain present in the communities generations later. Just as the memorials built in the interwar period signified to their communities who was most in need of
support, they enduringly remind contemporary observers, most often community members, whose families had been touched by a century old war.
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